



50 JOBS LOST AS STEEL FIRM SINKS

Report by Richard Guttridge

FIFTY workers have been made redundant after a steel maker which has operated in the Black Country for more than a century plunged into administration.

Bird Stevens in Quarry Bank has called in the administrators.

The Unite union said workers had initially been told they would be allowed to come back to work but have since been informed they will be made redundant.

Administrators Milner Boardman is handling the company's affairs. Darren Brookes, an administrator at Milner Boardman, confirmed that around 50 workers had been laid off.

He said: "The staff had been laid off by the directors prior to our appointment due to cash flow issues. Upon our appointment no funds were available to recommence trading and therefore, unfortunately, all the employees were made redundant."

"We are currently assisting them to make claims to the Redundancy Payments Office for entitlements due to them."

Bird Stevens has manufactured steel and iron at its factory at Merry Hill for decades.

Last year, all appeared to be going well for the firm when it was awarded a contract to supply metal cowls for use on Rolls Royce engines and the workforce was expanded by 10 per cent.

There was no sign of life at the factory on Monday where the shutters were down and main gates padlocked.

Devastating

A worker at a nearby firm said no-one had been on the site for around four weeks.

A recorded message that has been left on the company's switchboard says the offices are currently closed.

Unite's regional officer Caroline Crolley said it was unlikely the company would be rescued. She added: "Our members have been told they are being laid off. They had a letter telling them it was in administration."

"It's devastating. We are talking about workers who have served 20 years or more. It is one of those jobs that somebody takes and they stay with it until retirement."

Ms Crolley said the workers were sent home on April 12 on the understanding they would be able to resume their duties two weeks later.

She said the company's managing director had not been in contact with the union.

"They have already sent them the letter to claim for outstanding wages," she added.

Quarry Bank councillor David Sparks said: "This is very bad news as Bird Stevens are a part of the history of Quarry Bank. They are a long-standing company. Hopefully they will be able to come out of administration and revive."

In February last year, Bird Stevens director Nicola Price said the company was going from strength to strength.

DAISY THE DOG IS JUST WIZARD IN TOTO ROLE



Elysia Stratton who plays Dorothy has brought her dog Daisy to play Toto in Quarry Bank Musical Theatre Society's production of The Wizard of Oz

A RESCUE dog is to get her moment in the limelight after being chosen to star in an upcoming production of The Wizard of Oz.

Quarry Bank Musical Theatre Society was struggling to find the right canine candidate for the role of Toto in their forthcoming production of The Wizard of Oz.

Then Elysia Stretton, from Stourbridge – who plays Dorothy – suggested her own miniature schnauzer Daisy should audition for the role.

Daisy, thought to be 10 years old, impressed bosses at the amateur theatre company, who

had been searching far and wide for their perfect Toto. In turn's out the perfect pooch was on their doorstep all along.

So Daisy is not in Stourbridge anymore – she is on the stage preparing for the show at Brierley Hill Civic Hall next month.

Kathryn Head, publicity officer for the society, said: "We had a real surprise when we were looking for Dorothy's little dog Toto. When Elysia brought Daisy along to rehearsals she was very attentive and well behaved – we realised that here was a star in the making."

Owner Elysia is confident Daisy won't be overawed by the audiences when the show goes live.

"She is a major attention seeker so she will just want fuss from everyone," said Elysia. "There are a few times when she has to run on stage to me and other characters. She follows me around and does some little barks."

The show will run from June 7 to 11. Tickets can be booked by calling 07913 884208 or online at the website www.qbmts.org.uk and tickets cost £11 adults, £10 children and £36 for a family ticket.

INDUSTRY

Extra £400k needed for new skills centre

AN £11.7m manufacturing training centre in Dudley will cost £400,000 more than expected after an oil pipeline was discovered running underneath the site.

The foundry and pattern making training block is poised to be built at Thomas Dudley, off Tipton Road, as part of The Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills, one of three in the Black Country.

But the discovery of a pipeline on the land in Dudley has meant bosses have had to apply for £400,000 more funding from the Government's Local Growth Fund to make the site suitable.

RETAIL

WH Smith to stay at Merry Hill centre

THE WH Smith store in Merry Hill shopping centre is to stay open after a deal was agreed to save it.

The iconic chain had announced the shop would close during June but bosses have now announced it will remain part of the Black Country shopping centre.

It means that jobs at the store have been saved.

Bosses at the company said they had 'reached an agreement with the landlord' to enable them to stay put.

CRIME

Computers and safe stolen from company

THIEVES broke into an Oldbury manufacturing firm's base and made off with computers and the company safe – costing up to £15,000.

Gilca's premises in Wolverhampton Road was targeted late on Saturday night.

The firm's bosses believe a gang of crooks broke in, cut the alarm system and phone lines, and escaped with the eight computers as well as the company's safe.

With the damage caused to the premises, bosses estimate the total repair and replace bill will be between £12,000 and £15,000.

INSIDE

CLICK CLUB MEMORIES



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In death father helped four people live



Jason Massey – organ donor

A FATHER-OF-FIVE who died suddenly from pneumococcal meningitis was remembered at an organ donor awareness event.

Jason Massey's devastated family knew straight away they wanted to honour his wishes to be an organ donor.

His heart, liver and two kidneys went to help save the lives of four other people and made it easier for his relatives to come to terms with their grief.

Mr Massey, who worked as a car parts advisor, was taken ill suddenly with flu-like symptoms but the meningitis

advanced quickly and nothing could be done to save him. He died at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley on March 1 2014 aged 41.

His widow Ann, 40, of Rowley Regis, who has three daughters and two sons, was invited to the hospital for an organ donation awareness event along with his parents Carol and Pete.

It included the presentation of a model of The Gift of Life organ donation sculpture, that was unveiled at the hospital by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester in 2014.

Mrs Massey said: "We had already had the discussion about organ donation – we knew we both wanted to be donors.

"I am not going to need my organs when I'm dead so if they can help other people I want that to happen.

"We are pleased he was able to help other people which is what he would have wanted."

Mr Massey's mother Carol, a retired nurse, 67, said: "We think it's brilliant that Jason was able to help four people. We think Jason is a real hero."

Drunk man slashed ex-partner's throat

A DRUNK man who attacked the mother of his three children with a knife has been jailed for more than 15 years.

Dudley man Karl Hughes cut his former partner Toni Bennett with the eight inch blade just yards away from their children.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday, Hughes, of George Close, Dudley, admitted attempting to murder Miss Bennett on November 21 last year and possession of cannabis.

Miss Bennett and Hughes had been together for 14 years, but his drinking problem and jealousy meant the relationship had become 'fraught' and he had moved out. But on the day before the attack Hughes had visited the home in Kates Hill after 'begging' Miss Bennett. Mr Glyn Samuel, prosecuting, said he had then left under instruction from Miss Bennett but 'left a downstairs window unattended'.

Vodka

The court heard how 31-year-old Hughes – who had drunk nearly a bottle of vodka – crept into their home through the unlocked window at around 2.15am.

Miss Bennett urged him to leave but Hughes pushed her to the floor. Mr Samuel said: "He straddled her and as she lay on the floor produced the knife. She screamed then he covered her mouth with his hand."

"He had pressure on her mouth, which was pushing her head back exposing her throat. She says she thought she was going to die. He brought the knife up towards her throat and began to saw at her neck."

The court heard that the pair's nine-year-old son then appeared and Hughes 'froze', before shoving the knife into Miss Bennett's shoulder.

She managed to escape and the emergency services were alerted. She suffered a three centimetre deep by ten centimetre long cut to her throat, cuts to her neck, a stab wound to her shoulder and 'significant' defensive wounds to her hands.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said it 'was out of character' for Hughes, who was 'genuinely remorseful'.

Hughes was jailed for 15 years and three months for attempted murder and one month for possession of cannabis to run concurrently, plus £120 victim surcharge.

Dancers in New York nightmare



Staff and pupils from the Stourbridge Dance Academy bed down on chairs in New York's Paramount Hotel

A DANCE school boss from Stourbridge has said she will battle for full compensation after a 'nightmare' trip to New York.

A group of youngsters from the town's Dance Academy were forced to sleep on the floor of a Big Apple hotel with cockroaches nearby.

The squad of 28 dancers ran into difficulties after arriving at the Roosevelt Hotel at 9pm, only to be told that it was full. It has emerged that Virgin Atlantic, which booked the £850-per-head trip, were told

months ago but never passed on the message to the dance school, who were on a trip that included the chance to dance on Broadway.

Now they claim compensation offered for their holiday problems is inadequate, after academy head Beverly Rabone racked up a £244 phone bill calling Virgin's emergency number in the UK.

She said: "It was awful. We got to the hotel – all 28 of us – only to be told we didn't have a reservation. Everybody was so tired after

a long-haul flight. It was a nightmare.

"Virgin kept saying they were 'dealing with it' but nothing happened for two days."

A Virgin Atlantic spokesman said: "We never want to disappoint our customers. We are investigating the situation and, as a gesture of goodwill, we are now offering the group a complete refund of their accommodation costs, all breakfasts, and a reimbursement of their phone bill."

Back-pay for workers in tribunal wage case

CONSTRUCTION workers employed by Dudley Council have won a battle to be paid the same rate during holidays as they normally receive, after taking the authority to a tribunal.

The council has been ordered to pay 56 workers between £300 and £700 in back-pay as well as the higher holiday rates in future, after a judge ruled in the workers' favour at an employment tribunal.

The row centred around extra voluntary shifts carried out on a regular basis by the employees who work in housing maintenance and construction in the borough.

Construction union UCATT argued that as the shifts made up part of their normal wage and so the workers should earn the same amount while taking holidays.

The union's regional secretary Shaun Lee said he believed the case could prove to be a watershed moment for construction workers.

He said: "We're very pleased with this victory, not just for the members concerned, but because it may well set a precedent for employment tribunals handling identical cases in the future."

"These workers were being paid at a higher level than their original contract said and so their holiday pay should reflect that. It's logical and that's how the tribunal saw it."

Bosses at Dudley Council said they were assessing their options following the decision and would look at the legal implications.

Motorcyclist dies at collision scene

A MAN was killed when his motorcycle was involved in a crash with a car on the A458 between Bridgnorth and Stourbridge.

The road was closed throughout the afternoon after the crash at 1.15pm on Sunday. An investigation has been launched.

A spokesman for West Mercia Police said: "An adult male rider of a motorcycle has been declared dead at the scene by paramedic colleagues from the NHS."

The crash, between a silver saloon car and a black Suzuki motorbike, happened close to Rushmere Filling Station. Five fire crew were sent from Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock.

Police have called for any witnesses to the accident who have not yet come forward to contact them on 101.

Brewhouse date for The Empty Can

FOLK band The Empty Can will be playing in Lye tomorrow night (Friday). The band, who wrote the Black Country anthem, will be performing at the Sadler's Ales Brewhouse and Bar in Station Drive at 9.30pm with songs from their new album Sonic Boom.

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Council axe Sandwell Show after 36 year run

THE plug has been pulled on the Sandwell Show, after 36 years, council bosses have announced.

Falling visitor numbers due to bad weather has been partly blamed for shelving the free event, which attracted more than 100,000 people at its height.

Sandwell Council said it also believed the two-day show held at Sandwell Valley over the August bank holiday weekend had become 'outdated'.

Bosses are planning to replace it with a month-long summer festival at the beauty spot in August.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for highways and the environment, Councillor Maria Crompton said it was now looking for a firm to help stage the replacement event.

"We've been plagued by bad weather over the August bank holiday weekend for the past three years which has had an impact on the crowds," she said.

"While we've had many great Sandwell Shows over the years it has become a bit outdated and needs a refresh. As a result we are now looking for an outdoor events partner to join us putting on a summer festival of fun during the month of August, which we hope will appeal to more people and provide greater variety for visitors."

Smethwick councillor Richard Marshall agreed it was time to retire the show in its current format. He added: "It's been the same for at least 20 years with nothing new added to it. It's become tired and outdated"

Viva Musica host choral evening

SINGERS will be raising the roof of a Black Country church in aid of the Alzheimer's Society.

Viva Musica will be hosting a concert in Stourbridge as part of Dementia Awareness Week on Saturday evening.

From Verdi to West Side Story, the evening will bring a wide repertoire of music from the choir and soloists.

The concert will also include a celebration of the works of William Shakespeare, marking the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death.

The Gala Evening of Songs and Sonnets will take place at St James Church in Wollaston, from 7pm.

Tickets cost £10 and are available by calling 0121 550 5581 or 01562 883480.

Replicas of Saxon treasure in display

REPLICAS of some of the impressive items from the Staffordshire Hoard, Anglo-Saxon treasure discovered in a field near Walsall, are coming to Haden Hill House, Cradley Heath, in an exhibition, June 4 to July 3.

Conman put behind bars for 30 months



Timothy Hale – jailed

A BUILDER from Rowley Regis who fleeced a vulnerable client out of more than £16,000 is this week starting a two year and six month prison sentence.

Timothy Hale targeted Ken Morris while project managing the construction of a £30,000 garage at the home of the 71-year-old, who is hard of hearing and has failing sight.

Mr Morris had a long standing resentment over the failure to get his money back after spending £19,500 on a Mercedes that turned to be stolen. He was awarded compensation but had not received a penny ten years later. He explained the situation to Hale, aged 56, who – realising his unmarried client was wealthy – offered to get him a solicitor for £17,300 in 2012, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told. The defendant introduced him to the 'lawyer,' who was Hales' sister Julie Brennan, who has no legal training.

The victim gave her the 'fee' in two instalments while her co-defendant found a legitimate solicitor who took control of the case – at a cost of £3,925.

Hale pocketed a further £3,000 in 2014 by pretending it was needed to evict the man who sold the stolen Mercedes. He had already moved out.

Brennan, 58, took almost £35,000 more from Mr Morris by suggesting it was a 'loan' that would be repaid from damages she expected after a dog bit her.

Both defendants were found guilty in the £17,300 'solicitor' fraud while Brennan was further convicted in relation to a near £35,000 'loan' deception and Hale was separately found guilty of the £3,000 'eviction' swindle. All charges had been denied.

Hale, of Farm Road, Rowley Regis, was jailed for 30 months. Brennan, of Cockshed Lane, Halesowen, who has 27 previous convictions, was remanded on bail.

'Cheated' school dinner ladies win £500k payout

SCHOOL dinner ladies have received a payout totalling half a million pounds after being 'cheated' out of money in an equal pay dispute with Dudley Council.

Forty women took action after finding out their colleagues had been awarded much more money when the council settled the original disputes.

Some staff received tens of thousands of pounds less than others who did the same job.

The women – who were mostly school catering managers or kitchen staff – lost out after their legal representatives advised them to take an offer on the table from Dudley Council. For some, this was as little as a few hundred pounds, an amount which was dwarfed by the huge payouts their co-workers then received.

Claims for as much as £90,000 were paid to those who opted to wait it out.

Workers left furious at the huge discrepancies decided to take action against the legal teams who initially advised them to take the comparatively minuscule amounts.

The representatives – who have not been named – decided to settle and a total of £510,000 will be paid to the 40 women who lost out.

The highest single award is understood to be around £30,000.

Life-changing

Angela Manley, a director of WH Law Solicitors, which secured the payout, said: "We are proud of what we have done for these ladies. We really felt for them, they felt they had been cheated in a way.

"It's difficult working alongside people who received bigger awards, life-changing sums."

Dudley Council became embroiled in an equal pay dispute with female workers in 2010 when it emerged men were being paid up to 130 per cent more in similar roles.

Some women accepted offers in 2010 but later learned they could have claimed thousands more when colleagues went to tribunal or used their own law firm to go against the council and got larger rewards.

Anna Garratt, 49, who worked for Dudley Council for 28 years and a ran a school kitchen until earlier this year, was among those to receive a payout. The mother-of-one from Pen-snett said: "When we found out what other people were getting I was thinking 'hold on a minute, we should be getting that'."

Shoppers reveal 'bucket list' goals



Compton Hospice staff Charlotte Lilley (top) and Vicki Wootton with the bucket list chalk board

FROM meeting Leonardo di-Caprio to seeing Wolves win the FA Cup – shoppers in Wolverhampton and Dudley revealed their desires as part of a hospice campaign.

Staff from Compton Hospice took to the streets to encourage people to share their hopes and aspirations.

The move was part of a national death awareness campaign which aims to get people talking more

openly about death and their wishes for end of life.

Compton Hospice spokeswoman Grace Lee was one of those in Wolverhampton's Queen Square asking people what they would put on their 'bucket list', things to do before they die.

She said: "There was a huge variety. One young lad wanted to see Wolves win the FA Cup, and lots of people wanted to travel the world.

"Meeting favourite celebrities was a big one. In Dudley, we had someone wanting to go on a safari and another who said she wanted to make her son happy."

"Hospices often have an unfair reputation for being all about doom and gloom, and about it being the end. But we are always asking our patients what goals they want to achieve and if we can help them make it happen, we will."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Muggers steal a £40k luxury watch

A LUXURY watch worth £40,000 was stolen from a man's wrist at gunpoint in a terrifying street robbery.

The 21-year-old victim was hit over the head with a hammer before being threatened with the weapon by two hooded men in Sedgley.

Detectives believe that others may have been involved in planning the attack.

The man had been given the Aude-mars Piguet watch as a birthday present. He was treated in hospital for minor cuts, bruising and swelling and released later the same day.

Two in hospital after car flips

A MAN suffered possible spinal injuries as a car ended up on its roof after smashing into a wall.

He was taken to hospital in Dudley along with another man following the crash in Grange Lane, Stourbridge on Friday at 10.25pm.

The car hit a wall and telegraph pole before flipping onto its roof. A tyre was ripped from one of its wheels and the vehicle suffered major damage.

Firefighters from Stourbridge and Brierley Hill helped get the men out of the car after the accident. They were taken to Russells Hall Hospital.

Drop-in sessions focus on fostering

A SERIES of drop-in sessions for people interested in finding out more about fostering are being run in Dudley, organised to coincide with Fostering Care Fortnight, which began on Monday.

An event takes place today (Thursday) at Zion Christian Centre in Halesowen from 10am to noon; on Monday at Silver Jubilee Park Healthy Hub in Coseley from 10am to 1pm and on Wednesday at Zion Christian Centre, Halesowen, from 6pm to 8pm.

Homes are to be built on former factory site

TWENTY-FOUR homes will be built on former industrial land in Netherton, after the scheme was given the go-ahead by Dudley Council planners.

Proposals for the Bradney Chain and Engineering Company site in Quarry Road have been approved. An existing house and disused industrial building will be knocked down to make way for the new homes. An officer's report said the 'positive' development would help housing growth and regeneration.

Free recital at church

ACCLAIMED baritone Paul Mccroft and pianist John Jenkin will give a free performance of English songs during a charity coffee morning at St John's Church, Halesowen, on Saturday from 10.15am. Mr Mccroft began singing after joining his church choir at St Andrew's Church, Netherton.

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THE NHS in crisis? 10.05am: phoned GP to fix routine appointment for blood test. 10.55am same morning: blood test carried out.

PAY attention. I am going to tell you some interesting facts about yourself. You have a tendency to be self-critical. You have a great need for other people to like and admire you. You pride yourself on being an independent thinker. You don't accept other people's statements without satisfactory proof. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. Spot on? Of course I am. All the above statements apply to you, because they apply to everyone. They are known as Barnum statements, after the great American showman and master of hoaxes, P T Barnum. And they are the bedrock of every "psychic" act you'll ever see, from seances to fortune-telling and the predictions of the late, great astrologer Jonathan Cainer.



IT is a tragedy that Cainer, 58, died so young, apparently of a heart attack. His passing earlier this month has unleashed a torrent of testimonies to the alleged accuracy of his star-gazing. For a start, it is widely claimed that he predicted his own death. But he didn't. His last column before he died simply read: "We're not here for long. So make the most of every moment." That's a Barnum statement.

DAVID Cameron says if we leave the EU we risk war because terrible things happen whenever Britain turns its back on Europe. Really? We must be working from different history books. I seem to recall from O-level history that it was the 1839 Treaty of London and the 1904 Entente Cordiale that committed Britain to entering the First World War instead of watching from the sidelines. You could argue that the worst conflict this country has ever endured was the direct result not of turning our back on Europe but of getting too involved with it.

MY personal foreign policy can be summed up in four words. Make friends with Russia.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Government rethink on academies is welcomed

THE Government climbdown over plans to force all schools to become academies has been welcomed in Dudley with leaders saying schools should be free to choose.

The U-turn by Education Secretary Nicky Morgan came after a backlash by unions, councils and some Tory MPs over the proposal to take all schools out of local authority control by 2022.

By Clare Butler

The Government announced initial plans in its Budget to force 17,000 schools in England out of the control of local education authorities.

But Andrew Burns, principal of Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath, said each school should be free to choose – despite his school being part of an academy trust.

He said: "I am pleased that they have used common sense. It may be right for some schools but not others."

"Each school should be free to choose what they wish to do and what feels proper for them and their learning choices."

"We are part of an academy trust ourselves and we feel that works well for us and we benefit from it. But that does not mean its necessarily correct for everyone."

In January 2012, the school became an academy sponsored by Ormiston Academies Trust.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin also welcomed the

climbdown. The Labour MP said: "It is one thing if parents and people running a school want it to become an academy but there's no evidence that a dogmatic one-size-fits-all policy that forced all schools to become academies would have transformed standards, which should be the top priority. The best way to improve school standards is to invest in leadership, teacher recruitment and teacher training."

Two-thirds of secondary schools have already converted but 15,000 schools do not currently have academy status. Academies are independently run but state-funded schools, overseen by a not-for-profit business, known as an academy trust, and are often part of a chain.

The Department for Education still insist that a large number of schools will choose to convert to academies but that is now an 'aspiration' rather than compulsory.

The Voice finalist in pub gig



Sally Barker reached the final of The Voice in 2014

A FINALIST from BBC TV talent show The Voice is singing at a Stourbridge pub. Sally Barker finished in joint second place during the 2014 competition after her emotional performances reduced judge Tom Jones to tears.

The widowed Leicestershire mother-of-two had put her music career on hold to look after her two children.

She had been a member of female folk group The Poozies during the 1990s.

Sally has recorded six solo albums, covering folk, blues and jazz, and has supported artists including Bob Dylan and Robert Plant.

Toured

Last year she toured as singer with the surviving members of legendary folk group Fotheringay, stepping into the shoes of the late Sandy Denny.

She will perform at Katie Fitzgerald's in Enville Street, Stourbridge, on Thursday, May 26, at 8pm. Tickets cost £12. Call the box office on 01384 374410 or visit wegottickets.com website.

The following weekend, May 27 to 29, is the pub's own Katiesfest, featuring around 20 artists.

Car crook's sentence is reduced on appeal

A CROOKED car breaker from Stourbridge, part of a gang which dismantled stolen cars and sold the parts on eBay, has seen his jail term slashed.

Nicholas David Ryall, 50, of Redlake Road, was jailed for three years at Birmingham Crown Court after he admitted conspiracy to handle stolen motor vehicles.

Ryall and three others – Luke Arnold, 30, Robert Wood, 25, and Duncan Taylor, 46 – were involved in a plot to dismantle cars, including BMWs. Luxury motors were stripped between May 2012 and May 2014 at rented workshops in Cradley Heath and Bromsgrove. Mrs Justice Cox told London's Appeal Court it was 'clearly a large-scale professional conspiracy'.

Arnold, of no fixed abode, got four years eight months. Wood, of Dawlish Road, Selly Oak, and Taylor, of Station Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, each got three and a half years.

Ryall's lawyers argued his jail term was too harsh. They pointed to his previous good character and that he had only been involved in the conspiracy from February to May 2014.

Mrs Justice Cox, who was sitting with Judge Nicholas Hilliard QC, said there was 'a marked distinction' between the limited role of Ryall and that of his co-accused. Ruling his jail term 'excessive', it was reduced to two years and three months.

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Some of the artwork, part of artefacts from nine different museums



A ride-on locomotive built in 1900 by Grimshaw for Pitmaston Moor Green Railway



The Birmingham Museum Collection Centre is a huge warehouse in Dollman Street



This steam tractor, called Busy Bee, is the largest exhibit at the centre



Vintage toy cars which have been stored away at the premises

A magical history tour

IT looks like a scene from *Night at the Museum*, but this is part of the mammoth collection of artefacts that have been amassed from nine different locations.

The Museum Collections Centre in Birmingham, houses around 80 per cent of the artefacts in the Birmingham Museums Trust and holds over 800,000 pieces.

With a focus on Birmingham and the West Midlands, visitors often find themselves lost down memory lane, and sometimes physically

lost, since the site spans one-and-a-half hectares.

And, with such a large collection, it's no surprise that some of the artefacts are massive – in some cases weighing well over 5,000 kg.

While there are plenty of stuffed animals, the centre has some pretty bizarre finds, notably a giant spider crab which, according to Emily Locke, a collections support officer, is gargantuan. She said: "The oldest artefacts we have here are prehistoric stone tools, which are around two-and-a-half million years old and made by early humans. "Among the 800,000 objects, we have some special pieces that range from the massive to the bizarre. While there's a

steamroller which is certainly one of the heavier pieces, we've also got the giant spider crab.

"We are constantly making sure that we care for the different collections in the right way, though. We have to monitor the light, temperature and humidity levels throughout the building and make sure that there aren't any pests.

"I really enjoy just being able to spend time down in the store with the collection – I love sharing the moments when we manage to uncover the story behind an object. Safe-keeping, and being able to access our cultural heritage, is a fundamental part of why we do it – so people can know our shared history."



An old television waits to be used in an exhibition, stored at the centre

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Trams are 20s answer to a 90s problem

DAVID Cameron has caused a diplomatic stir for saying Nigeria and Afghanistan are "fantastically corrupt".

I'm sure he's right. But remind me, how many millions of taxpayers' money does the UK give to these countries? One set of figures suggests an eye-watering £280 million a year, which seems rather foolish when the Government seems to have little control over where it is going. Fantastically foolish, in fact.

□□□

ABOUT 76,000 fans had to be evacuated from Old Trafford on Sunday after a suspected bomb device was found in a toilet.

Thankfully, there was no explosive and the suspicious package turned out to be nothing more than a training device.

Still, some of the fans are furious at the incompetence, and who can blame them? For the Bournemouth supporters, it meant a wasted trip from the south coast. And for United fans, it meant another journey from the Home Counties.

□□□

IT looks like Dudley will be retaining its status as Britain's largest town or city without a rail link after the council dropped plans for a light shuttle service from Dudley Port station. A shame they couldn't tell us before the local elections, but there you go.

Yet again, it seems to be talk about extending the Midland Metro which has thrown a spanner in the works. Just like it was in the mid-1990s, when the council shelved proposals for the return of a proper railway link to the town, in favour of this elusive tram scheme.

In the meantime, sites along the proposed Metro route have been blighted with numerous attempts at regeneration hindered by the need to keep the route clear. Forgive my scepticism, but heavy electric trams are a 1920s solution to a 1990s transport problem.

The Metro scheme will cost £300 million, which will probably never materialise. It will also cause years of disruption to the Black Country road system, and affect many homes and businesses along the way. And by the time it sees the light of day, it will probably be about as up-to-date as a Sandie Shaw LP.

I very much doubt we will ever see the Midland Metro link from Wednesbury to Dudley, and frankly, I'm not sure I want to. I fear the main beneficiaries will not be the struggling town centres of the Black Country, but the areas that have already done pretty well out of regeneration policy.

The light shuttle service would have cost a fraction of the Metro, and could have been up and running within three years. A real missed opportunity.



A damaged road on A458 near Stourton



Potholes in Hunslet Road, Burntwood



A Highways Agency worker repairs a huge pothole

Problem is driving us motorists potty

Potholes are causing misery on the roads every single day and land car owners with large bills, as ROB COLLEDGE reports

THE sudden jolt, crunch of crumbling tarmac, and the thud of your car's suspension clattering – potholes cause misery on the roads every single day.

There are an incredible 31,000 potholes awaiting repair on Britain's roads across nearly 12,000 miles of roads.

And it is estimated they cause as many as one in 10 mechanical failures on our roads, costing motorists an estimated £730 million every year.

The national outrage at potholes has even led to the creation of a National Pothole Day by the website Street Repairs which takes place on January 15.

Freezing

The Government says it is investing more than ever to tackle the state of our roads – creating the first ever pothole fund. This year the Black Country and Staffordshire will get £1.5m to fill potholes. However, this has been described as a 'drop in the ocean' by council bosses.

Britain's climate makes it especially susceptible to potholes caused by water expanding as it freezes before melting. The road network has benefited from a record mild winter but the start to 2016 was not so welcoming.

Temperatures plummeted, bringing freezing conditions across the country.

Authorities are currently pay out more than £30 million in compensation claims due to poor roads. And new research reveals that seven in 10 experienced drivers think roads have got noticeably worse over the years they have been driving, with four out of five believing potholes and cracks are not fixed as quickly as they used to be.

A survey of nearly 10,000 over-50s by Saga Car Insurance found the majority of older mo-



Severe weather has taken its toll on roads

torists thought poor maintenance meant driving conditions had got worse in recent years.

Just one in 10 said road conditions had improved in their lifetime.

Sue Green, head of car insurance at Saga, said: "Around nine out of 10 over-50s drive regularly so it's not surprising they have great insight about the state of the UK's roads. People shouldn't have to play Russian roulette with their suspension."

As well as potentially damaging cars, potholes can be dangerous and even deadly for cyclists and motorcyclists.

In January, a mother-of-three died after hitting a pothole in the road which was due to be repaired by a council. Triathlete Kate Vanloo, 52, rode into the water-filled hole in Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire, and was struck by a car after being thrown into the road.

The road was reportedly due to have been

resurfaced before Christmas but the work was postponed. The pothole had been filled within 48 hours of the tragedy.

The Chancellor George Osborne announced a £250m pothole fund in his autumn statement as part of a package of measures to improve the country's creaking transport system.

Britain has more than 31,000 potholes awaiting repair on nearly 12,000 miles of roads, according to a report published in November.

The blighted roads would cover the distance from London to Wellington in New Zealand – roughly half way round the Earth.

A typical pothole measured 0.4 square metres and the average repair bill to cars for damage was £267, the research by insurer LV found.

The number of unfilled potholes could be higher, as only two-thirds of all councils re-

sponded to the insurer's Freedom of Information requests.

The research found drivers in the North East were most likely to suffer damage to their vehicles because of potholes, with 19 per cent having been affected, followed by 18 per cent of those in the West Midlands and 17 per cent in London.

In Wolverhampton, the council repairs more than 3,000 potholes every year. During 2014, the city council was awarded a cash windfall of £500,000 to fix thousands of potholes as part of a total £6.6m potholes cashpot shared with other Black Country and Staffordshire authorities.

Prime Minister David Cameron even singled Wolverhampton out for praise. "Wolverhampton has shown it is one of the leading areas in the country in its determination to beat potholes and is receiving extra cash as a result," he said.

But compensation payments to damaged cars remain a big pressure on the public purse. More than £1m has been paid out to drivers in Sandwell for damage caused to their cars by potholes.

Ravaged

Around 200 claims from motorists were settled by Sandwell Council between 2011 and 2015. Last year, council workmen filled in more than 2,000 holes on the borough's ravaged roads.

Potholes cost taxpayers in Staffordshire more than £58,000 in compensation for damaged cars in a single year.

Staffordshire was ranked the 15th worst in the country for cars damaged by potholes after it was revealed a total of 875 claims were made in 2013-14, resulting in a pay-out of £58,314. However, the figures, released by the RAC Foundation, also showed this amount is significantly lower than the compensation released in 2012-13, which saw £94,866 paid out by Staffordshire County Council.

In Dudley, there were 185 successful claims from motorists whose vehicles were damaged by potholes across the borough between October 1, 2012, to October 1, 2015.

The figures, revealed by a Freedom of Information request, show the authority has had to shell out £40,322 in that period.

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Obama advice motivated by TTIP deal

OBAMA came here for one reason only. That was to try to frighten the British voters to vote Remain, so that he can sign up the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement (TTIP) with the EU. They know that a Brexit would be a huge knock to the TTIP so they will try anything to keep us in line.

Obama is a puppet to big business. The TTIP is a trade agreement that in effect gives power to big business to allow these corporations to privatise public services, with the cherry in the cake being the NHS.

Spoiling ballot was only way to protest

I WOULD like to take issue with Mark Andrews (In My View, The Chronicle, May 12) and his view last week that: 'That there are nearly 12,000 people who are so sad that they go to the trouble of visiting the polling station for no other reason than to deliberately spoil their paper in some juvenile form of protest.'

I am one of those people and I am certainly no juvenile.

It may have escaped Mr Andrews' attention but most of us were also voting for our local councillors.

However, spoiling our papers for the election of another useless tier of management at a grotesque cost with a police force facing horrendous cuts is the only form of peaceful protest we have.

We were, after all, never asked if we wanted a Police and Crime Commissioner in the first place.

PETER BROWN
Wollaston

They will also have the right to sue our Government if they think they are holding back their future profits. For example, if a company wanted to start fracking in West Park and the Government stopped it, the company could sue for loss of future profits.

A similar deal, the North American Free Trade Agreement, has seen Lone Pine Resources suing the Canadian Government for 250 million dollars because they temporarily stopped them fracking in Quebec.

B K WILLIAMS
Tipton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Brits getting hung up on sovereignty

ALMOST every time some anti EU person writes or utters their rehearsed spiel, they mention sovereignty. May I ask them this question? Do the French or the Germans keep moaning about sovereignty?

Do you hear vast numbers in Spain or Italy mention it? What makes us British so different that we think that we are God's own race unable to do anything with our European neighbours unless we worry about sovereignty?

Do the great masses of British people really believe that we would be better off pulling out of Europe, abandoning human rights, and going cap-in-hand around the nations of the world seeking trade deals?

Have they never thought

that the people who want us to withdraw from the EU might have hidden agendas? Read your history and see how we used to be treated before human rights came into being and don't rely on readymade philosophies for your opinion. As regards President Obama 'telling' us how to vote, he didn't! He merely advised us.

There is a difference. And might I remind some readers and critic that USA stands for United States of America. They were all once individual states who formed a solid alliance. So what is the difference between them and the EU? We will impoverish ourselves by leaving the EU.

C K MILLWARD
Tipton

Act or it will Bee too late

NOT sure if your readers are aware but the Government is planning to lift certain restrictions on pesticide sales. This will seriously impact the bee population.

Strange as it sounds, the disappearing bee population the world over is a grave source of concern for experts and for us all as bees are the main pollinator for the world's crops.

At the risk of sounding dramatic, it is no exaggeration to say that the survival of civilization is at stake.

I would like to ask the readers to pressurise their representatives in Parliament and elsewhere to make sure that the restrictions on pesticides remain and are enforced.

RICHARD CLEMENTS
Quinton

Leave dogs in the shade

I RECENTLY visited Ashwood car boot sale and I was amazed and disgusted by how many people were there accompanied by their dog.

The hottest day of the year and these dogs were being dragged around the field whilst their owners stopped at every stall.

The poor dogs were panting like mad and desperate for a drink and some shade. Why, oh why, do these people bring their dogs to a car boot sale?

Surely the dog would be much happier at home in the cool.

Please readers think twice about taking your dogs out in this hot weather – it simply is not good for them.

J GREENHALL
Kingswinford

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL



Miles Hunt from The Wonder Stuff seen in full flow in the band's heyday



The Mighty Lemon Drops performing in 1986



Graham Crabb of Pop Will Eat Itself, performing at the club in December 1986



Pop Will Eat Itself, one of the big Midland bands



The club was renowned for its low mirrored ceiling

Exhibition will Click with indie fans hoping to rekindle music memories

UNSEEN photographs of Black Country rock bands have been revealed as part of an exhibition documenting the music scene in the 1980's.

The exhibition, called 'Is There Anyone Out There?', is being held at Birmingham City University's Parkside Gallery and explores the history of the city's 'The Click Club', which was located on Broad Street.

There will be a collection of original photographs, film footage, posters, audio recordings and eyewitness accounts exploring different bands that performed there.

Among them will be Black Country bands 'Pop Will Eat Itself' and 'Ned's Atomic Dustbin', which both formed in Stourbridge.

Pop Will Eat Itself formed in 1986 and achieved Top 40 hits with 'Can U Dig It?' and 'Wise Up! Sucker' from their album, 'This Is the Day...This Is the Hour...This

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jamie Brassington

Is This? Ned's Atomic Dustbin formed the following year.

In April 1991 they released their album 'God Fodder', which reached number 4 in the UK top 40 albums chart.

Other bands featuring in the exhibition include Blur, Primal Scream and Bjork.

Showcased

The exhibition draws upon the personal archive of music promoter and photographer Dave Travis - where thousands of photographs taken at the club between 1986 and 1990 will be showcased.

It marks 30 years since the club, located at 'Burberries on the Street' nightclub on Broad Street, opened.

Travis said: "Steve Coxon and I started The Click Club out of frustration at having to travel all over the Midlands to see the

bands that we liked or that we were reviewing for the music press.

"We thought that it would be an ideal situation if we stayed where we were and the bands came to us. Birmingham was very different in the 1980s; most of the clubs stipulated a 'smart dress' policy and as a result the nights I and my friends could go to were limited.

"The Click Club operated a 'no smart dress' policy although it was always more of an attitude restriction."

The club showcased a wide variety of acts during its lifetime which reflected the varied culture of indie music such as Primal Scream, We've Got a Fuzzbox and We're Gonna Use It, and The Mighty Lemon Drops.

It also supported the emergence of bands from the area such as The Wonder Stuff and Ocean Colour Scene.

The material in the exhibition is built up from donations of people who attended the event and loaned artefacts.

The title of the exhibition comes from the

single Is There Anyone Out There? from Birmingham band Mighty Mighty that was released in 1986.

Paul Long, Professor of Media and Cultural History at the University said: "The lovelorn lyric evokes the romantic angst of youth but also poses a question for the curators of this exhibition: Who is out there who might know about the Click Club and is anyone else interested in this subject?"

"We are interested in finding out how people engage with the exhibition and welcome feedback from those who were part of this community as well the wider public of Birmingham and beyond.

"We want to know: What is the value of this material?"

"What does it tell us beyond confirming the memories of the few individuals it concerned, and does such material have wider importance and contributions to make for our understanding of the past?"

The exhibition is free to attend and runs until Friday, May 27, at Birmingham City University's Parkside Gallery.




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Perververted driving instructor is jailed



Ex-instructor Gary Rolinson – four year prison sentence

A DRIVING instructor from Kingswinford is starting a four-year prison sentence after being convicted of sexually assaulting six male pupils.

Gary Rolinson, who ran the 500+ Driving School based in Kingswinford, was also ordered to register as a sex offender for life.

The 60-year-old preyed on six teenagers during driving lessons between 2012 and 2014.

Rolinson was found guilty of 13 offences of sexual assault and one of causing a person to engage in sexual activity after a 14-day trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court in January. He was sentenced last week.

The crimes involved six 17-year-old and 18-year-old men. He was first arrested in 2012 but it was two years later when West Midlands Police began contacting other pupils after a further complaint.

Speaking afterwards, Detective Inspector Sarah Booth, from West Midlands Police's Public Protection Unit, said: "Gary Rolinson was trusted to deliver a professional service but he betrayed everyone by using his respected position as a driving instructor for his own sexual gratification. These lads should have been excited as they came of age and got behind the wheel of a car for the first time, but instead they were left confused, intimidated or scared by Rolinson's behaviour."

"It took a lot of courage for them to speak out. Thanks to their bravery in coming forward and giving evidence at court a predatory sex offender has now been taken off the streets."

The driving instructor, who now lives in Llandrindod Wells, was sentenced at Warwick Crown Court.

Sandwell's cancer death rate one of the highest

SANDWELL had one of the highest death rates from cancer in England over a 15-year period, new figures show.

The statistics were published by the Office for National Statistics for the years between 1998 and 2013. Year on year cancer patients in Sandwell had one of the lowest survival rates in the country.

In 2013 Sandwell had the fourth lowest survival rate at 65.8 per cent.

The areas that were lower for that year were Thanet and Medway in Kent, and the London borough of Barking & Dagenham.

Bosses at Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group have said they are always 'striving to improve rates.'

Gap

Cancer survival rates has steadily improved both nationally and in Sandwell in that time.

Cherry Shaw, spokesman for Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG, said: "Cancer survival rates have been steadily improving in Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG area from 1998 to 2013. We have also seen the gap is closing between the Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG area and our neighbouring Solihull CCG

By Jamie Brassington

area, which is the area with the highest cancer survival rate in Birmingham & Black Country region.

"Although cancer survival has improved, we are always striving to improve rates. A key priority for the CCG is timely treatment for those diagnosed with cancer."

"Work is ongoing with hospitals and partners to ensure patients receive the treatment that they need, when they need it"

An area of cancer the clinical commissioning group is particularly looking at is bowel cancer. Ms Shaw said: "A bowel screening programme led by NHS England aims to identify people who appear healthy, but may be at increased risk of bowel cancer."

Men and women aged between 60 and 74 are offered bowel screening every two years.

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Volunteers are key to success of charity centre



Volunteers gather to cut the celebration cake as Barnardo's Donation Centre in Brierley Hill is a year old this month

FUNDRAISERS are celebrating the success of a charity shop which has received more than a thousand bags of donations since its opening a year ago.

Barnardo's opened a special donation centre in Brierley Hill. Customers can browse for a bargain at the front of the store but it also acts as a hub for the distribution of goods to other shops.

There are large bays at the back of the store at The Moor Centre, in High Street, where volunteers sort stock.

The Brierley Hill hub has received 1,200 bags of clothes, books, toys, games and accessories since opening, which has been made possible by 6,000 hours of support from hardworking volunteers.

Cake

To celebrate its first anniversary this month, the team gathered together to cut a specially-decorated cake with a large number one.

Barnardo's shop manager Carole Hughes said: "We wanted to arrange a special thank-you for everyone who has worked so hard and achieved so much during our first year of trading."

"We have an amazing team of 19 volunteers, aged from 14 to 66-years-old, who give anything from four to 24 hours of their own time each week in order to support the charity."

She added: "Some were here on work experience and decided to stay with us afterwards, others simply wanted to get out of the house or gain more confidence."

"Some even use it as an opportunity to improve their English language skills."

The donation centre is open from Monday to Saturday from 9am to 5.30pm and also on Sunday from 10am to 4pm.



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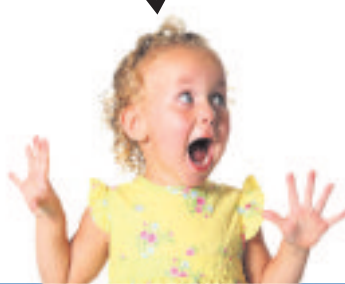
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Award-winning Sir Lenny has got the blues on new album

HE may be best known for raising a laugh but these days Sir Lenny Henry has got the blues.

The Dudley-born comic has released a new blues album and he says it had always been a dream of his to make such an album.

"I've been making music, and singing and performing since I was 16," he said. "I've always wanted to make an album. I've always loved the blues and I've grown to appreciate it more as I've got older. I think that's what happens with the blues."

The album, *New Millennium Blues*, features 14 tracks with topics including media hacking, obesity and police brutality against black Americans.

He admits to masking his Black Country accent to suit the blues style.

He said: "I always sing in a semi-American accent because R&B and blues lends itself to that. I think if I was a folk singer it would be dif-



Sir Lenny's blues album

ferent. I'd sing like Lenny Henry from Dudley.

"But because black people invented the form I don't have a problem with adopting an American accent to sing certain songs."

His latest project comes after he wrote and starred in the semi-autobiographical BBC drama, *Danny and the Human Zoo*, which received critical claim.

Sir Lenny said he wasn't fazed about any negative comments that might come his way.

"There's always going to be someone who doesn't like you - that's the world," he said.

"But I was always advised to present a moving target, to have a lot of things that you want to do, because you might not be able to do the same thing for an entire career."

Blessed

"So I've always tried to do different things. With the blues album, I did that because I wanted to. But I don't profess to be anything other than an actor and comedian who wants to enjoy his career at this stage of his life. I've got a lot of things I like doing, so I am very blessed," said the Bafta-award winner.

Sir Lenny has toured with a soul band before but this labour of love is a mix of classic blues and original songs, written and composed with his Blackacre Road Band. The name is another nod to his Dudley roots and came about following the positive reaction to a live charity performance Sir Lenny and the band performed for Sky Arts three-part documentary series, *Lenny Henry's Got The Blues*.

Sir Lenny added: "It doesn't matter where I'm from. My mum grew up in a house that used to be a plantation, in Jamaica, so I've got just as much right to sing the blues as anybody else."

Election result stirs hope for Hippodrome



Dudley Hippodrome - UKIP are determined to save the former theatre which had been destined for demolition

THE CAMPAIGN to save Dudley's landmark Hippodrome has been given fresh hope - as the leaders of both the Conservative and UKIP groups at the borough council say they want to keep the historic venue.

Dudley Council has been left with no party in overall control after the local elections. Sources say there are behind-the-scenes talks between the Tories and UKIP. The eight UKIP councillors now hold the balance of

power. If the two parties voted together on any issue - including the Hippodrome - they would be able to outvote biggest single party, Labour.

UKIP group leader Councillor Paul Brothwood said saving the iconic Castle Hill venue is one of the party's priorities and UKIP would 'work with any party to achieve this'.

His Tory counterpart Patrick Harley said that he wants to save the building, which hosted such stars as

Laurel and Hardy before becoming a bingo hall. It is now unused.

Council Harley praised new proposals by The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome, which needs up to £8 million to bring their rescue plan to fruition. He said: "I would love to see something happen with the building and I don't agree with knocking it down."

The Labour-run council proposed to demolish the building and replace it with a landscaped open space.

Media giant is new owner at radio station

OLDBURY-BASED radio station Free Radio - the former Beacon Radio - has been sold to a multi-national media giant.

Orion Media, which owns Free Radio and East Midlands sister station Gem, has been taken over by the Bauer Media Group for an undisclosed sum. Hamburg-based Bauer already operates stations including Kiss, Magic and Absolute Radio. It also has magazine titles such as Grazia, Empire and Heat, and said it now plans to grow the business.

Beacon, which was based in Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, was re-branded as Free in 2012. The station, which serves Shropshire as well as the Black Country, moved the following year to new studios in Black Country House in Rounds Green Road, Oldbury.

Growing

Bauer chief executive Paul Keenan said: "Free Radio and Gem are influential radio stations in one of the UK's fastest growing regions. Bauer's desire to build out its extensive radio business is testament to the nature of the industry which continues to be a strong, robust and growing platform, thriving in the always-on, mobile, connected world. Bauer Media's leadership in digital and personalised advertising technology will accelerate the development of the brands and we look forward to working with the team to grow the business."

Free Radio and Gem have a combined weekly listener figure of around 1.25 million.

Water works are set to reduce busy highway

PART of a dual carriageway in Halesowen will be reduced to one lane during water works.

The work will be taking place on Kent Road, near Leasowes High School, until Monday with the road reduced to one lane heading towards Hagley Road West outside peak times.

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Fundraising will pack a punch for cancer charity

A FUNDRAISING Cradley gym boss is once again gearing up to raise money for charity as he prepares to enter the boxing ring for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Two years ago, Wayne Scott-Fox, aged 35, from Tipton, started fundraising for various causes.

One of his challenges involved learning to box and he raised more than £2,000 for ward 15 of Birmingham Children's Hospital. He went on to dye his hair blue for a boy suffering with cerebral palsy and raised £1,224 for his family to take him on his first ever holiday.

Turning his attention to the problem of homeless people in Wolverhampton, Wayne handed out blankets, boots and warm clothing during the winter period.

Then only two weeks ago he boxed in aid of Sedgley's Rosie Byrne, who

has lymphoblastic leukaemia, raising £1,600.

Now along with professional boxer Les Byfield and white collar fighter Lee Jeavons, his next major event will be on August 27 at The Arena on Hagley Road, Stourbridge, where he will be boxing for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Heart

Wayne, owner of not-for-profit gym Golden Gloves School of Boxing & Fitness in Cradley, said: "This is an event that is very close to my heart."

"My mother died of cancer, so it's something I've always looked to raise money and awareness for."

Tickets cost £20 for the event, with ringside tables at £350. Entry is at 6pm, with the fights starting at 7pm.



Boxing for charity – from left, Black Country fighters Les Byfield, Wayne Scott-Fox and Lee Jeavons

Police reject calls for CCTV cameras

POLICE have dismissed calls for CCTV cameras in an area of Halesowen that residents say is blighted by drug crime and vandalism.

Halesowen North councillor Stuart Henley has been pressing for cameras in Shell Corner in a bid to cut crime. But police say that crime levels in the area are low, so surveillance is not needed.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "There has been no knife offences and only one serious attack in 18 months. There is no evidence to support that it is a hot-spot for crime and for CCTV to be put in place."

The news will come as a blow to people in the area who had highlighted incidents such as an attack on a blind man in Belgrave Road on February 1. The 54-year-old victim was being helped into a car when a man squirted a liquid into his eyes that caused a burning sensation.

Councillor Henley said: "We have had problems with drugs and anti-social behaviour on and off for many years and I think it's right to have some sort of surveillance to catch people. With police cutbacks surely something like this would help and act as a deterrent."

Teenage driver in high-speed car chase

A TEENAGER led police on a high-speed chase across the Black Country, narrowly avoiding oncoming traffic while travelling at up to 80mph on busy roads.

Police dash-cam footage showed Josiah Johnson weaving in and out of traffic, moving onto the wrong side of the road, running red lights and travelling the wrong way around roundabouts in an attempt to evade capture.

The 18-year-old, who had previously been banned from driving, even rammed an unmarked police car which had tried to box him in. He was told he could have 'killed himself or someone else'.

Police followed Johnson's Volkswagen Bora for around 20 minutes between Cradley Heath and Blackheath, all within 30mph speed limits, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The car was spotted by officers on patrol in an unmarked vehicle at around 1.30pm on April 8 and was suspected of being involved in criminality, Mr Mark Phillips, prosecuting, told the court.

Escape

But as soon as they attempted to get the driver to pull over he put his foot down and tried to get away.

A pursuit ensued with Johnson speeding through red lights at 50mph and swapping sides of the road to avoid hitting other cars.

He was eventually brought to a halt by police but his escape attempt was not over. He then set off on foot but was caught a short

By Richard Guttridge

time later. Two other men who were in the car with him were never caught, the court was told.

After being shown the video of his driving by police he asked them if he could have a copy 'as a trophy', Judge Anjad Nawaz said.

Johnson, who was said to suffer from Asperger syndrome, was given a suspended sentence.

He told police that he had 'panicked' as he had recently bought the car and it was not insured.

Mr Phillips said it was fortunate schools were not open on the day.

He said: "He accepted in interview he could have killed himself or somebody else."

Johnson, of Copthall Road, Handsworth, pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and possession of cannabis. He was given a 14-month custodial sentence, suspended for two years. He was also banned from driving for two years and ordered to complete 120 hours of unpaid work.

Concert cash for piano scholarships

HUNDREDS of pounds has been raised by musicians at a South Staffordshire village to help fund a scholarship scheme for talented young pianists.

More than 120 people attended a concert at St Peter's Church in Kinver where Kinver High School piano teacher Ayaki Davies performed with several students including Max Jukes, Alice Rumble, Imogen Parfett, Evie Louisa Jones and Isabella Loveridge. There was a guest performance by Stourbridge pianist Michael Jones.

The recital raised £700 to fund piano scholarships for two students at Kinver High School and sixth form and for the upkeep of the church.

Mrs Davies said: "The spring charity concert is extremely important, not only does the concert raise vital funds for supporting musical development, it also provides an opportunity for children to demonstrate – and learn – a love of classical music."



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Tribute plaque? That'd be just Dandy



Dandy cartoonist Charlie Crick, who was born in Rood End and who died in 2013 aged 97

A Black Country poet, musician and author has launched a campaign for a blue plaque to be made in honour of revered Dandy cartoonist Charlie Grigg.

The comic was published for 75 years, before moving entirely online in 2012. Langley-born Mr Grigg, who loved drawing from the age of six, quickly became one of the nation's most celebrated comic cartoonists and was behind the design for Dandy's Korky the Kat for more than 20 years, the iconic Desperate Dan and a host of other sketches.

He died aged 97 on December 4,

2013, but his long career will be remembered for his iconic drawings.

He took over drawing the cover for The Dandy on January 20, 1962, working there for the next 22 years, with 21 of those illustrating all the Dandy Annual Covers.

Now Dr Brian Dakin is looking for the Rood End-born artist to be finally given the 'recognition he deserves'.

Dr Dakin has been in touch with the Head Mistress at Mr Grigg's old school, Rood End Primary School, at possible options for the plaque to be located.

He said: "Charlie Grigg was such an

important man, and his contribution to the youth culture of a generation was incredible.

"He created all of these iconic cartoons, but did it all without leaving Langley.

"His work is known all over the world, and so he should be recognised as the man behind the brilliant sketches of Dandy.

"The committee at Black Country Radio is keen to do a documentary on Charlie's life and we're in the process of planning events for the winter to raise money for the plaque, which is going to cost around £600."

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ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

By John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



PULL up a chair. . . With many of us glued to the TV at some point during the day it's essential to have something comfortable to sit on – and vintage chairs can prove just as appealing as their modern counterparts if you find the right ones.

All kinds of vintage chairs can also play an essential role in other rooms throughout the home, so this week I thought we'd take a look at what can be bought at auction.

Let's start with chairs suitable for the sitting room and what could be nicer than a traditional wing-backed armchair.

The original wing chairs were actually high-backed wooden benches, so not really that comfortable, but gradually people added cushions and by the 17th century had opted for full-blown upholstery,

The much copied Queen Anne wing chair, with its elegant cabriole legs, was introduced in the 18th century and at the same time Hepplewhite designed his famous 'saddle cheek' wing chair with a lower seat.

The Victorians added padding to form a 'fireside chair', sometimes called a 'grandfather chair', and these were usually filled with horse hair.

It's important to remember that these early designs were replicated in later years so make sure you're buying the genuine item before you part with any cash.

It's unlikely to find immaculate upholstery on a vintage piece unless it's been restored (new fabric or leather won't much affect value) and wooden backs, seat and legs will usually show signs of wear.

Other nice vintage chairs for the sitting room include 1930s 'club chairs', usually made of leather, Chesterfields, Churchill chairs and Lansdown chairs – again, look out for modern copies!

Vintage dining chairs can be bought for very reasonable prices at auction (we recently sold a set of six Georgian ones at auction), they can look really good, don't be afraid to mix and match and even add a carver chair at the end of a table – but remember that quite often these chairs will not be as sturdy as modern ones.

Antique oak and pine chairs are perfect for the kitchen, again a mixture of styles works well, and for your office you may be lucky enough to find an old leather 'captain's chair'.

For bedrooms, go for salon or boudoir chairs (again, watch out for clever reproductions) and for a hallway ladder-back or balloon chairs are perfect.

Vintage furniture is selling for very reasonable, sometimes absurdly cheap, prices in the saleroom at present so now is definitely the time to buy.

Don't be afraid of a little wear and tear, it doesn't take much time or effort to restore vintage chairs to their former glory.

And it won't break the bank to get a professional upholsterer to replace leather and fabric.

Perry & Phillips holds valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm at its Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, and auctions of antiques and collectibles are held on the first Tuesday of each month.



Today's 'dress code' much more comfortable



Beyonce's Ivy Park range

IT is only in recent years we have worn sportswear as an everyday clothing item. The designer trainer has changed the way we dress. We like to be comfortable! It is said to be America's biggest contribution to fashion and the development of technical fabrics has increased its desirability.

Main brands such as Nike and Adidas sponsor our top sportsmen and women and we aspire to the fit, healthy look they portray.

However most of today's sportswear is not designed for the gym, it's the sequins that shout fashion and not the running track.

The top designer catwalks show garments inspired by tennis, running, equestrian events and yoga, functional and stylish but is it really for the high street?

The newest range to be launched by Topshop is Ivy Park by Beyonce. There is in fact so much choice, the sports leisure garment has become a staple wardrobe item.

Many businesses are dropping the 'Dress Down Friday' to stop the casual revolution taking over in their offices, lycra and trainers banned to be replaced by smart attire. Dress codes are seen less in restaurants and bars.

STYLE FOCUS

With Janet Timmis



We find more excuses to be comfortable and less to be smart, it is a shame, our ancestors would be shocked. My father wore a suit and tie to go shopping. I see less people dress up to go out shopping and even to go out to a party. The sweat pant is a staple wardrobe item for men and women.

Celebrities

Most of this can be attributed to the designer trainer, a coveted item, highly desired, worn by music icons and celebrities and launched seasonally. The top of the range cost well over £100 and have become collector's items, found inside glass cases in retail outlets.

It all started with the rubber soled shoes called plimsolls which were developed in the US in the late 1800s. The first canvas 'sneak-

ers' were advertised as a quiet shoe, hence the name, in 1917, around the same time the Converse Shoe Company was established, super fashionable and now a popular choice for the comfort of the bride's feet at her wedding reception.

Functional sportswear and footwear today is extremely technical using highly developed materials, breathable, super lightweight, aerodynamic, can wick away perspiration, keep us warm, support muscles, aid circulation and reduce tiredness. The well-known brands are endorsed by our celebrity sportsmen and women.

Gym goers have a whole specialist wardrobe for different experiences. Sweaty Betty for yoga, Speedos for swimming and the inevitable Adidas and Nike garments for all activities, the list of brands is endless and it includes the supermarkets, top designer capsule collections and celebrity offerings. If we are not super fit we can at least look the part.

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Michaela Strachan with John Leslie in 1993



Michaela arriving for an event in 2005



Michaela, seen here in 1996, has travelled the world filming animals

Ready to re-unite with 'family' for Springwatch



Michaela Strachan from Springwatch

MICHAELA Strachan's roaring with laughter as she recalls orangutans in Borneo stealing her make-up bag, racing with it up to the top of a tree, and daubing themselves with her cosmetics.

"A girl's make-up bag is a bit precious, but more importantly, that make-up was all that stood between me and having a completely bare face on camera during two weeks filming for Orangutan Diary!" says the BBC Two Springwatch presenter, who has a wealth of entertaining anecdotes gathered during a 30-year career working on wildlife programmes.

"It was one of those many occasions where things don't go according to plan because you can never rely on animals or nature. I sat for ages at the bottom of the tree hoping to retrieve whatever the orangutans dropped, while they smeared on my lipstick, ate eye shadows and chewed all the brushes, and all I got was a powder compact and an eye shadow! It's lucky I'm not vain and the only thing I ever worry about is 'zhooshing' my fringe into shape to hide my big forehead!"

In truth, it doesn't look as though she needs much slap. Fresh-faced, her tousled

By Gabrielle Fagan

shoulder-length hair framing her face, she talks engagingly about juggling family life in South Africa, with regular trips to the UK to film for the hugely popular Watch series, which she presents alongside Chris Packham and Martin Hughes-Games. Springwatch returns to screens this month. Strachan will also host SuperDogs Live at the National Pet Show next month.

"That will be just great fun as I adore dogs. We have a beloved Jack Russell, Toto, who's a little doddery now, but so precious to the family. It's lovely to be able to do other roles while I'm here and I feel I have a great balance to my life these days, which is great because I love both being a mum and working," says Strachan, who lives in Cape Town with her partner of 12 years, wildlife cameraman, Nick Chevallier and their 10-year-old son, Oliver.

"When I'm filming in Britain for the Watch, it's like being with my other 'family'. Martin, Chris, and I get on phenomenally well, respect each other and support each other and it's wonderful being on a series the public seems to love."

Last year, the surprise star of the series was a stickleback, with only two spines instead of three, nicknamed Spineless Simon, who viewers saw struggling to find a mate.

"I don't know how we're going to top him!" says Strachan with a smile. "It was such a surprise that Si captured the audience's imagination, but I think it's because he battled against the odds and the British love a successful underdog. There's bound to be something unexpected this year – you can't predict what will happen."

Two years ago, she experienced firsthand the unpredictability of life when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had a double mastectomy and extensive reconstructive surgery, but is determined to focus on the positive rather than allowing the illness to define her.

She says: "As you get older, you want to de-clutter your life rather than fill it up with stuff and you also have a clearer idea of what makes you happy. These days, I realise I get pleasure out of very simple things – spending quality time with people I feel a connection with is special for me."

Strachan, who first found fame in the Eighties as a children's presenter on TV-am's Wide Awake Club, has travelled the world filming animals and conservation projects for TV programmes.

"It means that apart from seeing blue whales in the wild, which I hope to do one day, I've done and seen pretty well everything that was on my bucket list," she says.

Synth-pop duo are in harmony

ALBUMS

by Leon Burakowski

WEST Midlands synth duo Field Harmonics seem to have found the common ground between Clannad and Depeche Mode on their sometimes magnificent, sometimes derivative, second album *Corners*.

The electro-pop pair consist of Wolverhampton musician and producer Rob Glover, from experimental outfit epic45, and 19-year-old singer-songwriter Bryony Williams.

Highlights include the two singles *Life* and *Heron*, the sombre grandeur of *Words* and epic closing track *Fear*.

These People, the first album in six years from former Verve frontman **Richard Ashcroft**, celebrates his melancholy melodic strengths whilst also exploring a harder electronic sound on opener *Out Of My Body* and single *Hold On*.

The fact that Ashcroft is reunited with Will Malone, who helped create the string arrangements on classic Verve albums *A Northern Soul*, *Urban Hymns* and Ashcroft's solo debut *Alone With Everybody*, can ensure anyone who counts *A Song for the Lovers* among their favourites that they are in safe hands. This is *How It Feels* and closing track *Songs Of Experience* both have that langorous Ashcroft quality and, a few lyrical platitudes aside, this is a solid return to form.

Young Norwegian DJ and producer **Kygo** (it rolls off the tongue easier than Kyrre Gervell-Dahl) will make a considerable impact with his debut album **Cloud Nine**, as it is chock-full of special guest singers including John Legend, Foxes, Labrinth and Kodaline.



West Midlands synth duo Field Harmonics pictured in concert

The classically trained pianist turned Wireless festival headliner has already notched up one billion plays on Spotify and his album boasts three hits – *Stole The Show* featuring Parson James, *Firestone* with Conrad Sewell and *Stay* featuring teenager Maty Noyes. Raging featuring Kodaline will be the next.

What these songs cleverly do is combine pop hooks with the feel-good euphoria of dance music, though like most current pop it tends to the bland.

Oasis sung by Foxes and penned by Sia, *Not Alone* with Rhodes, *Fiction* featuring Tom Odell could also be plucked as potential hits.

At his best Jake Webb, leader of Aussie trio **Methyl Ethel**, is like a lo-fi Brian Wilson. He wrote, sang and played everything on debut album **Oh Inhuman Spectacle**, and formed the band to take his music from the bedroom to the world.

He shares a similar eclectic neo-psychedelic style with fellow Perth scene luminaries Tame Impala, though the nearest fit with Webb's quirky atmospheric style is Mercury Rev circa *Deserter's Songs*.

A few tracks still have the hallmarks of bedroom laptop noodling but there are several moments of pop brilliance, including jangly gems *Rogues* and *Twilight Driving*.

Another Splash of Colour: New Psychedelia in Britain 1980-1985 is a handsome three disc boxed set from RPM with a detailed booklet looking at the mostly London based bands that formed this scene that developed out of the Mod revival and New Wave.

There are some golden nuggets among the 64 tracks, including songs from *The Attractions* (minus Elvis Costello), *The Soft Boys* and their leader Robyn Hitchcock, Julian Cope, *Freight Train* and *The Green Telescope*. But there is also a lot of mediocre stuff from various Mod outfits and punks (Charlie Harper, Captain Sensible).

The interesting psych revival was actually taking place across the Atlantic, featuring *The Bangles*, *The Rain Parade* and *Prince on his Around The World In A Day* album, and the proper next stage of British psychedelic rock came in 1989 with the arrival of *The Stone Roses* and *The Charlatans*.

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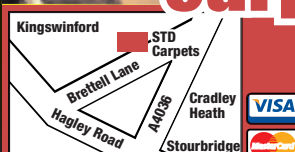
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Beautiful baskets add pizzazz to your patio

Now's the ideal time to plant up some hanging baskets with annuals, edibles and other colourful flora to give your patio some pizzazz. HANNAH STEPHENSON offers tips on how to get the best show from your baskets

YOU can buy hanging baskets pretty cheaply these days from garden centres, but the choice of colour and plant is often limited, so it's much more satisfying to do it yourself.

Wire baskets are among the most popular, which you can either line with sphagnum moss, coconut fibre or other eco-friendly made-to-fit material with ready-made holes at the sides so you can plant into the side of the basket as well as out of the top of it. I usually add a smaller circle of black polythene to the inner base of the liner to reduce water seepage.

But there are also many pretty closed-sided baskets on the market which are easier to plant as you only have to put plants in the top, and easier to water, but you can't achieve the all-round effect you can with an open-sided basket.

For me, the biggest bugbear about hanging baskets is the watering, but you can now buy compost which is specially formulated for containers, incorporating water-retaining agents and feed. If you can't find that and are just using annuals in your basket, go for multi-purpose compost, adding water-retaining granules to the liner before the compost, and slow-release plant food pellets.

If you are planting a longer-lasting basket with more permanent plants such as hostas and heucheras, or evergreens including skimmias and variegated ivies, use John Innes No 2 compost.

For open-sided baskets, place the basket on top of a bucket, which will allow easy access from all sides. Insert the liner and press it into position. Have your compost in a bucket, so you can add your pre-soaked water-retaining crystals to it, as well as slow-release fertiliser granules, and mix thoroughly.

If you want to plant through the sides of the basket and the holes in the liner aren't pre-cut, make cuts in the liner for each plant using a knife.

Add enough compost to the basket to level off below the side holes, then plant your plants through the holes, either from the outside, compressing the roots so they will go through the holes, or from the inside, carefully feeding the shoots through the hole.

Build up another layer of compost, firming those first plants as you go, and continue planting. Trailing plants such as lobelia, verbena and bacopa should be planted around the sides and at the edge of the top of the basket, while upright plants should be placed in the centre. While historically hanging baskets have incorporated a riot of different colours and plant varieties, more recently, people have gone for single varieties. Perhaps that's because they tend to be lower maintenance as the same plants will have the same needs in terms of watering and feeding.

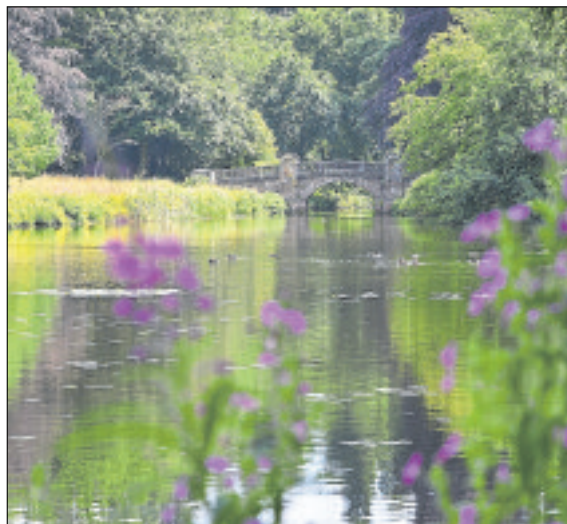
If you are planting cherry tomatoes such as 'Hundred's and Thousands' or 'Tumbler' in a hanging basket, water-retaining granules will not be sufficient and you'll need to water the basket twice a day in summer and feed regularly with tomato plant food.

Don't want to be a slave to the watering can? Go for drought-tolerant plants such as pelargoniums, helichrysus, osteospermum and diascia. Of course, additional greenery such as ivy will rarely let you down.

And remember that if you are planting your baskets up now, most of the annuals you use won't be frost hardy, so make sure you bring them under a porch or under cover in the evening until all chance of frost has passed.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

1. Sow fast-maturing and late-flowering annuals directly into their flowering position
2. Move overwintered hardy annuals to their final flowering position
3. Water and feed plants in the greenhouse regularly
4. Feed seedlings and young plants which are growing poorly or have pale, yellowing foliage
5. Take leaf cuttings from plants with thick, fleshy leaves including African violets, sedum and hoyas
6. Remove blanket weed from the pond to let oxygen in



Discover the joys of Temple Wood at Weston Park throughout May

'Jewel in the crown' open to visitors for anniversary

TEMPLE Wood, one of only five Pleasure Grounds created by Capability Brown, will be opening to the public at Weston Park during May as part of the celebrations to mark 300 years since the birth of the legendary landscaper.

The wood is part of the estate's extensive grounds and is one of the jewels in the crown of Brown's work, showcasing his virtuosity as a landscaper. A naturalistic and romantic paradise, Temple Wood is a classic Brown representation and, with help from Weston's landscaping team, including head gardener Martin Gee, it remains little altered from Brown's original vision, first conceived in the 1760s.

Nestled on the periphery of the wood is the famous Temple of Diana, which was inspired by Andrea Palladio's 16th century Venetian works, and is a stunningly romantic vision when encountered within the tranquil setting of the surrounding woodland.

In addition to exploring the natural delights of Temple Wood, families can also enjoy the excitement of the newly updated Adventure Playground featuring a whole host of exciting new

equipment including trampolines, slides and a new double zip wire.

Capability Brown's enduring legacy is being rejoiced throughout 2016 and Weston Park, as one of his most celebrated schemes, will be leading the charge with events in the grounds he designed, exhibitions inspired by Brown and talks and walks enthused by the master.

Throughout the year, Weston Park will give people the chance to immerse themselves into the world and vision of England's most illustrious landscaper.

Mr Gee said: "Capability Brown's landscaping work at Weston Park is a huge part of why the estate is regarded as a national treasure and we do everything we can to celebrate this heritage. Temple Wood is one of the highlights of the grounds, a perfect place for an enchanting and peaceful walk and to reflect on Brown's genius. We've been working hard to prepare the woods so they're looking their best in time for May and we're looking forward to giving people the chance to explore this landscaping gem."

To find out more visit www.weston-park.com/brown300

Young guns make their mark on garden world

By Louise Rouvray

ANYONE who thinks gardening is strictly for people of a certain age, think again.

A growing stream of young talent is now making its way into major shows and hitting the headlines in horticultural competitions.

Ones to watch at this month's RHS Chelsea Flower Show include Sam Ovens, 27, who is designing his first Chelsea show garden for Cloudy Bay; and Hugo Bugg, 29, already a Chelsea Gold Medal winner, designing his second Chelsea show garden for the Royal Bank of Canada.

Both studied garden design at Falmouth University and both are previous winners of the RHS' prestigious Young Garden Designer of the Year competition.

The contest continues to provide a platform for young horticultural talent at the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park in Cheshire, which this year runs from July 20 to 24.

Sam grew up on a working farm in Cornwall, which spawned his interest in nature, while Hugo – the youngest ever winner of gold for a large show garden at Chelsea (in 2014) – grew up helping his father in a big family garden in Devon.

Landscaping

"In the summer holidays I worked for a local landscape firm, so I was out there doing both hard landscaping and planting every holiday. I learned loads. I worked really hard and learned a lot from contractors and I really learned my plants as well," says Hugo.

But you don't have to be at a prestigious garden show to find amazing young talent.

Take 29-year-old Matthew Pottage, the youngest ever RHS curator who, since December, has been in charge of the society's flagship garden at Wisley, Surrey.

He landed the job less than 12 years after arriving at Wisley as a trainee and now oversees 75 gardening staff.

So, what advice would they give young people looking for a career in horticulture?

"The RHS garden competitions and shows are a great way to start out and to gain initial publicity," says Sam.

"My advice to young gardeners would be to set themselves apart, find a niche and focus on what really makes them different."

Hugo adds: "Just keep as many doors open as possible."

"When I graduated, a lot of people felt you could just go straight out and be a self-employed garden designer, but that's very difficult because you haven't got a portfolio of live projects."

"I was open to everything. I was doing graphic design, worked for different people and some of those projects not related to gardens turned into garden design projects the following year."

"Work hard, but don't close any doors."

Hugo says he'd recommend university to anyone wanting a career in garden design.

"Personally, I feel it's important to study garden design at a professional level because you can take on bigger jobs and can understand the process better."



Hot stuff – Sam Ovens, who grew up on a farm in Cornwall, is seen in his garden 'The Sky's The Limit'



Top of the crops – Matthew Pottage is one to watch

Matthew says: "The Grow Careers website is a really good place to start (www.growcareers.info). I started off working in a garden centre alongside my college training and it was definitely a good way to start."

"One of our most important missions at the RHS is to change the image of horticulture as a low-paid, unskilled career choice – it's really one of the most inspirational, life-enriching and rewarding careers you can choose."

"We want to attract more great people into the profession, through our campaign for school gardening, by appointing young

gardeners and with the help of well-known ambassadors like Alan Titchmarsh.

"There are also so many gardening careers you can choose – you could be a botanist, an arboriculturist, a landscape designer or a garden manager – the options are endless."



Winner – Hugo Bugg already has a Chelsea Gold Medal

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There has never been such choice for TV viewers

Competition could see rivals offer joint service



THE BBC is believed to have held talks with rivals including ITV about the possibility of joining forces to combat the threat from streaming services such as Netflix.

The two broadcasters are reportedly looking into the possibility of setting up their own pay-on-demand video streaming service. The talks are also thought to include NBC Universal, which produces shows such as ITV's Downton Abbey.

The new service is likely to focus predominantly on programmes which have already been screened on mainstream channels, although it is likely there will be some original material as well.

At the moment, TV licence-payers receive free access to all BBC content, including the internet-based on-demand iPlayer service, but this content is removed 30 days after transmission.

Older content can be accessed through a number of pay-TV services, including the recently launched BBC Store, but Netflix also features popular shows such as Top Gear.



ITV also runs a 30-day digital TV service, and the two broadcasters are hoping that by joining forces to sell their archive programmes, they might be able to take on the likes of Netflix, which has more than 75 million subscribers across the world.

The commercial value of such a service could prove crucial to the BBC, which has been told to find annual savings worth £800 million. Meanwhile, ITV chief Adam Crozier hopes that the extra revenue stream would make the company less reliant on conventional advertising income.

In February, Mr Crozier said ITV would seek to "explore new models for content creation and distribution, through a mix of pay channels and online". It has invested heavily in building its production arm, ITV Studios, which saw revenues grow a third to £1.2bn and profits up 27 per cent to £206m.

In July last year, the BBC launched the global version of its iPlayer service, which charged users subscription fees for its app in western Europe, Australia and Canada.



TV times are a-changing as viewers take control

By Mark Andrews

WATER coolers weren't that common in the early 1970s, but if they had been then Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? would have been what has become known as water-cooler television.

At its height, the laddish sitcom about the escapades of two young men from the north-east was watched by 27 million people, about half the UK population of the day, and was the talk of workplaces the length and breadth of the country.

They just don't make television like that these days, and they certainly don't pull in anything like those viewing figures. While last year's top-rated programme, the grand final of the Great British Bake Off, pulled in just over 15 million viewers, this is far from the norm.

Britain's Got Talent, which has topped the TV ratings of the past few weeks, is attracting just over 9.6 million viewers, while EastEnders and Coronation Street are typically watched by audiences of 6 to 8 million – compared to more than 30 million when Angie Watts was presented with her divorce papers on Christmas Day, 1986, or 26.7 million when Hilda Ogden left Coronation Street the following year.

Novelty

The end of the truly huge viewing figures is partly down to the sheer number of channels now available. Back in the days of Bob and Terry's escapades, there were still only three channels, with the colour service that came with the launch of BBC2 in 1964 still something of a novelty.

But a growing number of people are turning their back on conventional TV services as they increasingly use internet-based on-demand services such as Netflix or BBC iPlayer, which can be viewed through computers, tablets or mobile phones.

The past two years have seen a steady decline in TV ownership, and new figures from the Broadcasters Audience Research Board (Barb) show that 1.3 million households – nearly one in 20 – do not own a television set.

At the same time, there has been a surge in the number of people subscribing to on-demand pay-per-view services. At the end of 2014, just 14 per cent of households had subscriptions with the services, but by the end of 2015 that had almost doubled to 24 per cent.

Brandon Paskin, from the Priorslee area of Telford, is typical of the new generation who no longer bother with conventional television services.

While Mr Paskin subscribes to on-demand services Netflix and Now TV, he no longer has access to conventional television channels.

"The main reason I don't choose to watch live television is that everything I might want to watch is on demand now," says the 24-year-old van driver. "I can pick a time that suits me instead of sticking to schedules."

The report said that Netflix, which has scored a string of hit shows including House of Cards and Making a Murderer, continues to dominate the market, despite growth of rivals Amazon Video and Now TV.

The number of households with Netflix grew by 1.4 million over the 12-month period, compared with an increase of 500,000 households for Amazon Video and 300,000 households for Now TV.

And while it is perhaps not surprising that the new players have threatened the old BBC-ITV monopoly, more recent entrants to the TV market such as Sky could also see themselves coming under more intense pressure.

Mr Paskin points out that the cost of subscribing to a service such as Netflix is about £10 a month, substantially cheaper than a satellite or cable service.

"I only have Netflix and Now TV at the moment and I'd say it's easier to find something you want to watch than mindlessly flicking through Sky's 2,000-plus channels and finding nothing."

"A Sky bill is closer to £60 a month for any kind of decent package, so in my eyes the value for money with subscriptions is miles better. Not to mention one subscription can be used on multiple accounts by multiple people."

This trend is only likely to head one way if the younger generation are anything to go



They just don't make television like they used to, and they certainly don't pull in anything like the same viewing figures



Today's modern family has many more options when it comes to watching popular television shows and films

by. A separate survey, by research agency, Childwise, showed that children spent more time on their computers than watching television programmes. And it found that among those who did watch television, Netflix is the most popular service.

But the Barb report, which is based on a survey of 53,000 people, suggests that the reasons for deserting traditional television services may be more complex and varied

than simply a switch to internet-based providers.

"One theory is that non-TV households are online pioneers who are keen on TV but prefer to use computer devices to access it," it says.

Of course, there is a fly in the ointment for internet giants, particularly in rural areas such as Shropshire. Despite a multi-million campaign to increase access to

superfast broadband there are still many places that are still not on the network.

The days of television as a communal experience, where whole factories and offices talk about what they have seen on TV the night before, may be numbered. But the pace with which the internet revolution takes place may well depend on the rate of expansion in the county's broadband network.

fast the ticket

Lear's here, with Don



Mag's musical memories

Jackie – Page 23



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The Sound of Music



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Birmingham Hippodrome
Opera singing finalist in The Voice 2015 Lucy O'Byrne will play Maria in this latest revival of the ever-popular family musical with Coronation Street's Andrew Lancel as Captain Von Trapp.
www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Busted



Friday, 7.30pm
Genting Arena, NEC, B'ham
The comeback fans thought would never happen, even by the year 3000, as Charlie Simpson rejoins Matt Willis and James Bourne for guitar slinging noughties pop hits.
www.gentingarena.co.uk

James



Friday, 7.30pm
Barclaycard Arena, B'ham
Sit Down (or stand up) to singalong with Tim Booth (pictured) and co back with album Girl At The End Of The World. Don't miss support act Jack Savoretti.
[Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk](http://www.barclaycardarena.co.uk)

Graham Nash



Sunday, 8pm
Town Hall, Birmingham
Back with new album This Path Tonight, the Salford-born singer-songwriter from The Hollies and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young looks back over five decades.
[Visit www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk)

MUSIC

Grimthorpe Colliery Band
Sat at 7.30pm, £19.50
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: Tchaikovsky's Fifth
Wed at 7.30pm, Thu at 2.15pm, £12.50 - £45
Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Fairport Convention
Fri at 7.45pm,
The Robin 2 Hotel, 20-28 Mount Pleasant, Bilston, West Midlands, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Panic Room
Sat at 3pm, Sun at 3pm
The Robin 2 Hotel, 20-28 Mount Pleasant, Bilston, West Midlands, WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Space
Sat at 7pm,
O2 Academy Birmingham, 16-18 Bristol Street, Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 01952 382382

Dominic Kirwan
Sun at 7.30pm,
Oakengates Theatre, Limes Road, Telford, Telford and Wrekin, TF2 6EP. Call 01952 382382

Beverley Knight
Thu at 7pm,
Slade Rooms, Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Charlie Puth
Sun at 7pm,
The Institute, 78 Digbeth, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Laura Mvula
Sat at 6pm,
The Institute, 78 Digbeth, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

The Smyths: The Smiths Tribute
Fri at 6.30pm, £12
O2 Academy Birmingham, 16-18 Bristol Street, Birmingham, B1 1DB. Call 0121 622 8250

James
Fri at 6pm,
Barclaycard Arena, King Edwards Rd, City Centre, Birmingham, B1 2AA. Call 0121 780 4141

The Primitives
Thu at 7.30pm - 11pm,
Hare & Hounds, 106 High Street, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 7JZ. Call 0844 870 0000

Lukas Graham
Thu at 7pm,
The Institute, 78 Digbeth, Dig-

beth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Busted
Fri at 6pm,
Genting Arena, Genting Arena, Perimeter Road, Birmingham, B40 1NT. Call 0121 780 4141

G Easy
Tue at 7pm - 11pm,
The Institute, 78 Digbeth, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 6DY. Call 0121 643 0428

Josh Groban
Sat at 8pm, £50
Symphony Hall, Broad Street, Birmingham, Birmingham, B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

ATTRACTIONS & MUSEUMS

Himley Hall And Country Park
Fri at 7.30am, Sat at 7.30am, Sun at 7.30am, Mon at 7.30am, Tue at 7.30am, Wed at 7.30am, Thu at 7.30am, Free
Himley Hall & Park, Dudley, West Midlands, DY3 4DF. Call 01384 817817

The REP - Backstage Tours
Sat at 11am,
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, St George's Court, Albion Street, Birmingham, B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

A Celebration Of Women And Art
Thu at 1pm - 1.45pm,
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3DH. Call 0121 303 1966

Theatre Tour
Sat at 10.30am,
New Alexandra Theatre, Suffolk Street Queensway, Birmingham, West Midlands, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Haden Hill House Museum
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 2pm - 6pm, Sun at 11am - 3pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
Haden Hill House Museum, Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath, B64 7JU. Call 01384 569444

National Trust: Wightwick Manor
Fri at 12pm - 5pm, Sat at 12pm - 5pm, Sun at 12pm - 5pm, Mon at 12pm - 5pm, Wed at 12pm - 5pm, Thu at 12pm - 5pm, £4.45 - £22.25
Wightwick Manor and Gardens, Wightwick Bank, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV6 8EE. Call 01902 760100

Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford
Fri at 10am - 6pm, Sat at 10am - 6pm, Sun at 10am - 6pm, Mon at 10am - 6pm, Tue at 10am - 6pm, Wed at 10am - 6pm, Thu

at 10am - 6pm, Free, Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP. Call 01902 376200

West Midland Safari And Leisure Park
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 6pm, Tue at 10am - 6pm, Thu at 10am - 6pm, £0 - £19.99
West Midland Safari Park, Spring Grove, Bewdley,, Worcestershire,, DY12 1LF. Call 01299 40211

Dudley Museum & Art Gallery
Fri at 10am - 4pm, Sat at 10am - 4pm, Mon at 10am - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 4pm, Wed at 10am - 4pm, Thu at 10am - 4pm, Free
Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, 3 Priory Street, Dudley, DY1 1EJ. Call 01384 815575

Broadfield House Glass Museum
Fri at 12pm - 4pm, Sat at 12pm - 4pm, Sun at 12pm - 4pm, Tue at 12pm - 4pm, Wed at 12pm - 4pm, Thu at 12pm - 4pm, Free
Broadfield House Glass Museum, Compton Drive, Kingswinford, West Midlands, DY6 9NS. Call 01384 812745

Dudley Zoo & Castle
Fri at 10am - 5.30pm, Sat at 10am - 5.30pm, Sun at 10am - 5.30pm, Mon at 10am - 5.30pm, Tue at 10am - 5.30pm, Wed at 10am - 5.30pm, Thu at 10am - 5.30pm, £0 - £13.60
Dudley Zoological Gardens, Castle Hill, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 4QF. Call 0844 474 2272

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
Fri at 10.30am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, B3 3DH. Call 0121 303 1966

Museum Of Cannock Chase
Fri at 11am - 5pm, Sat at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm, Free
The Museum Of Cannock Chase, Valley Road, Cannock, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1TD. Call 01543 877666

Walsall Museum
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 4pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, Free
Walsall Museum, Lichfield Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 1TR. Call 01922 653116

National Trust: Moseley Old Hall
Sat at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Mon at 11am - 5pm, Tue

at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm,
Moseley Old Hall, Moseley Old Hall Lane, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire , WV10 7HY. Call 01902 782808

THEATRE

Thoroughly Modern Millie
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
Prince Of Wales Centre, Church Street, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1DE. Call 01543 578762

Neighbourhood Watch
Fri at 7.30pm, Sat at 7.30pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Jackie The Musical
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm, £
New Alexandra Theatre, Suffolk Street Queensway, Birmingham, West Midlands, B5 4DS. Call 0844 871 3011

Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat
Fri at 5pm, 8pm, Sat at 2pm, 5pm, 8pm,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

The Sound Of Music
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 2pm, 7.30pm,
Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst Street, Southside, Birmingham, West Midlands, B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Made In Dagenham: West Bromwich Operatic Society
Tue at 7.30pm, Wed at 2.30pm, 7.30pm, Thu at 7.30pm, £16 - £22
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

COMEDY

Katherine Ryan: Kathbun
Fri at 8pm - 10pm,
Birmingham Town Hall, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B3 3DQ. Call 0121 780 3333

Eddie Izzard: Force Majeure
Mon at 7pm, 8pm, 9pm, £
mac, Cannon Hill Road, Birmingham, B12 9QH. Call 0121 446 3232

Julian Clary: The Joy Of Mincing
Thu at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

Mark Steel: Who Do I Think I Am?
Fri at 8pm,
Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 2LT. Call 01785 254653

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Fri at 10am - 5pm, 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, 10am - 5pm, £
Twenty Twenty Gallery, 3-4 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire, TF13 6AA. Call 01952 727952

A Big Bang: The Origins Of The Pop Art Collection Part 2
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, £
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Lichfield St, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DU. Call 01902 552055

Chris Holloway: A Transport Of Delight
Mon at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm,
The Museum Of Cannock Chase, Valley Road, Hednesford, WS12 1TD. Call 01543 877666

Two Tyres
Fri at 10am - 1pm.
Bilston Craft Gallery, Mount Pleasant, Bilston, West Midlands, WV14 7LU. Call 01902 552507

David Ward: In A Landscape
Fri at 10am - 5pm, Sat at 10am - 5pm, 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, £
Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Lichfield St, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DU. Call 01902 552055

Big Ceramics: Discover Clay On A Monumental Scale
Fri at 11am - 5pm, Sat at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 10am - 5pm, Mon at 10am - 5pm, Tue at 10am - 5pm, Wed at 10am - 5pm, Thu at 10am - 5pm, 10am - 5pm, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Lichfield St, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1DU. Call 01902 552055

Around The World With Masks
Fri at 11am - 5pm, Sat at 11am - 5pm, Sun at 11am - 5pm, Tue at 11am - 5pm, Wed at 11am - 5pm, Thu at 11am - 5pm.
Bantock House, Finchfield Rd, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV3 9LQ. Call 01902 552195

Antique Valuation Day
Thu at 11am - 2pm.
Bantock House, Finchfield Rd, Wolverhampton, WV3 9LQ. Call 01902 552195

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Don is back and king of the stage

IN ancient Britain bound by clan loyalty and the power of the sword, King Lear decides to give up his crown.

As he divides the kingdom between his daughters, family ties disintegrate, order disappears and the land slides into chaos.

Don Warrington, best known for his roles in TV shows including *Rising Damp* and, more recently, *Death in Paradise*, is coming back to Birmingham's Repertory Theatre, to play Shakespeare's greatest tragic figure.

The 64-year-old actor has won acclaim in the title role in *King Lear* on tour, one of the productions to commemorate 400 years since Shakespeare's death. Birmingham Rep, from tonight (Thursday) until May 28 is the last stop for the show – a co-production between Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre and the Talawa Theatre Company, the UK's primary Black led touring theatre company.

He has performed Shakespeare in Birmingham before, playing Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*. But this formidable, strong lead role in a three hour epic is a whole new challenge.

"It's huge. It's like looking at Mount Everest and thinking, 'I'm going to try and climb that'. You're trying to convey the essence of a human being," says Don.

"I have seen actors play Lear previously, but I asked myself what he was like, and what kind of man he was. There are clues given in the text; he's an old man who clearly has a temper. He's used to ruling, and does something that's not very wise.

"I thought about him in terms



A game of thrones – Don Warrington as King Lear, later this summer Sir Antony Sher will also take on the actor's 'Everest' at Stratford

of what a man of that age would be feeling. What would be going on with him? That's how I approached it."

Shakespeare is challenging to bring to life from text – it takes a talented actor to portray the characters as humans that we can relate to.

"Shakespeare was meant to be per-

formed, not read in a dry, academic way," says Don. "They're literature but they're meant to be done and seen. That's what he wrote them for – the stage. The more people that see them performed, with flesh and blood on them, the easier it becomes to understand."

New jukebox Jackie show

A 50something divorced mum with a teenage son is transported back to her own teen years when she happens across a box of her old Jackie magazines in Jackie The Musical.

Staged at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, May 28, the Mamma Mia-style jukebox musical plunders the heart-throb hits of the '70s, originally done by Donny Osmond, David Cassidy, David Essex and Marc Bolan.

Her teenage self is mystified by texting, apps and social media, and advises her middle aged self to turn to the magazine's Cathy 'n' Claire for advice on romance.

The show promises a feast of nostalgia for the age of tank tops, platform shoes, enormous flares, Tartan scarves and Top Of The Pops.

The show stars Janet Dibley, pictured left, (from TV's *The Two of Us*, *EastEnders* and *Doctors*) as Jackie, former Stourbridge Oldswinford Hospital school pupil and *EastEnders* actor Nicholas Bailey as Max, musical theatre and former Bread actor Graham Bickley as John, and Daisy Steere as Young Jackie.

With choreography by Arlene Phillips and full of hits such as *Crazy Horses*, *I Love To Love* and *Tiger Feet*, the show's creative consultant is Grumpy Old Woman and former Jackie editor Nina Myskow. With a trendy London address but actually based in the Scottish city of Dundee, Jackie the magazine lasted for nearly 30s years from 1964 to '93, and for around ten years was the top-selling teen title. It was full of fashion and beauty tips, love stories, life advice and pin-up posters of pop idols that ended up plastered across bedroom walls.



Fairport convene for Robin concert

TOMORROW night (Friday) folk-rock legends Fairport Convention are at Bilston's Robin 2 celebrating half a century of making music.

The line-up for this seated show includes Simon Nicol, Dave Pegg, Ric Sanders, Chris Leslie and Gerry Conway. Support comes from impressive young Black Country bluesman Sunjay.

Welsh prog rockers Panic Room take over the venue for the rest of the weekend with a host of special guests.

Canadian country singer-songwriter Tia McGrath brings her Crazy Beautiful acoustic tour to the Mount Pleasant venue on Wednesday. See www.therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

Strike musical's amateur premiere

WEST Bromwich Operatic Society will be offering the West Midlands amateur premiere of the former West End musical *Made in Dagenham* at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, May 28.

It's 1968 and women workers take on the bosses and a male dominated union at the Ford car plant in Dagenham after a pay cut is imposed on them.

Rachel Davies, from Stourbridge, plays strike leader Rita, with John Wetherall as her husband Eddie in the show, which features some strong language.

For tickets from £16 to £22, call 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk website.

Double bill starts gallery sessions

A CONCERT series begins at a new venue in Wolverhampton tomorrow evening (Friday) with The Songwriter Sessions at the city art gallery's cafe bar.

The emphasis will be on musicianship and songwriting talent in an intimate environment at the Lichfield Street gallery.

The series begins with a double bill of Wolverhampton's Gary O'Dea and former Wolverhampton University student Alex Vann. Singer and guitarist O'Dea has won acclaim for his album *Fly*. Vann recently released the fourth of his *Silhouettes & Pirouettes* collections of songs. Tickets £5.50 on the door at 7.30pm or call 0870 320 7000.

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CHOICE



Benedict Cumberbatch
The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses – Richard III (BBC2, 9pm)

The country seems to be finally at peace under the rule of Edward IV and the House of York. However, a new threat emerges from within the King's own family, as his ruthless younger brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, sets plans in motion to take the throne for himself. Beginning by arranging the imprisonment of unsuspecting middle brother George, Richard manipulates and murders all who stand in his way. As he rises in power, the Duke of Richmond raises an army to overthrow him, leading to the final battle of the Wars of the Roses. Last in the series, Benedict Cumberbatch, Judi Dench, Ben Daniels and James Fleet star.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.** 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Cooks. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** Jimmy Hill – A Man for All Seasons. (R) **2.00** FA Cup: The Road to Wembley. (R) **2.35** A Question of Sport. (R) **3.10** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **4.00** BBC News. **4.10** Regional Programme. **4.15** Match of the Day Live – The 2016 FA Cup Final. Crystal Palace v Manchester United (Kick-off 5.30pm). **7.50** **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** The lively comedian introduces music by Katherine Jenkins and a performance by stage mentalist Colin Cloud. Plus, Robbie Savage hands over his mobile phone in Celebrity Send To All. **8.35** **The National Lottery Live.** Gaby Roslin reveals the results of the Lotto and Thunderball draws. **8.45** **Casualty.** Dylan receives a nasty surprise when Bryan turns up at the ED, having cut his hand smashing a window after locking baby Rihanna in his car. While Bryan apologises for his past behaviour, Dylan is not so sure he can ever change. Connie discovers Jacob and Elle are old friends, and the pair are given a chance to catch up while dealing with injuries at the scene of a factory accident. However, when Elle starts asking strange, probing questions about the status quo at Holby, it becomes there is an ulterior motive behind her recent arrival. Meanwhile, Charlie encourages David to be more confident, and Big Mac lies to Noel about seeking help with his addiction. **9.35** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes fears her family is planning to send her to a nursing home, when in fact it is Spartacus the dog who is set to be sent away. Comedy, starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R) **10.05** BBC News; Weather. **10.25** **Peter Kay's Comedy Shuffle.** Including clips of the comedian reminiscing about his school holidays, the Phoenix club's singles night and the meeting between Geraldine McQueen and Paul McCartney. (R) **10.55** **Match of the Day – 2016 FA Cup Final Highlights;** National Lottery Update. **11.30** **Film: Dream House.** (2011) BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.10** The Women's Football Show. (R) **6.40** **Film: The Story of GI Joe.** (1945) BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** Natural World. (R) **11.00** FA Cup Classics. (R) **12.00** The Hair Bikers: Everyday Gourmets. (R) **1.00** **Film: I Know Where I'm Going!** (1945) **2.30** Flog It! (R) **3.00** Bake Off: Creme de la Creme. (R) **4.00** Swimming: European Championships. Helen Skelton presents live coverage from London. **6.00** **This Week's World.** Current affairs magazine show in which Emily Maitlis dissects current global problem affecting people's everyday lives, from energy to the economy and worldwide living standards. **6.30** **Gardeners' World.** Monty Don plants up containers for his jewel garden. Carol Klein identifies plants able to survive in cracks and crevices, and Zephaniah Lindo meets a fellow primula enthusiast. (R) **7.00** **Choose the Right Puppy for You.** Part two of two. Kate Humble discovers the truth about different breeds of dog, while behaviourist Louise Glazebrook helps more people find the perfect dog for them. (R) **8.00** **Grand Tours of Scotland.** New series. Paul Murton travels round the Isle of Arran, visiting the famous King's Cave ochranza, Brodick Castle and Kildonan before ending his trip at Cleat's Store. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Captain Mainwaring and the platoon welcome the first American troops to Walmington-on-Sea, but Anglo-US relations become strained. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R) **9.00** **The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses – Richard III.** The country is finally at peace under the rule of Edward IV and the House of York – but the ruthless Duke of Gloucester plots to seize the throne for himself. Last in the series. **11.10** **Film: Last Chance Harvey.** (2008) A miserable New Yorker falls for an equally unfulfilled woman he meets while in London to attend his daughter's wedding. Romantic drama, starring Dustin Hoffman and Emma Thompson. **12.40** **Film: Elena.** (2011) **2.20** This Is BBC Two. **5.35** The Great Chelsea Garden Challenge. (R)

ITV

- 6.00** CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Bikers. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **12.05** ITV News; Weather. **12.14** Regional Programme. **12.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.15** BBC Champ. (R) **2.20** **Film: Hulk.** (2003) Comic-strip adventure, starring Eric Bana. **4.55** The Wine Show. **6.00** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **6.15** **ITV News;** Weather. **6.30** **You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring a possessed toddler and a driver chasing a runaway car. **7.00** **Bang on the Money.** Game show in which two teams from Middlesbrough and Cleethorpes aim to hit a specific target number in a series of physical and mental challenges. **8.00** **Britain's Got Talent.** Ant and Dec host the final round of auditions before the nationwide talent contest moves on to the next stage, the Judges' Decisions. One last selection of would-be stars demonstrate their signature skills to Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and David Walliams, in the hope of securing a place among the acts seeking a place in the semi-finals. However, there are no Golden Buzzers left to send promising stars straight through to the finals, so even the most eye-catching acts will have to fight for a place in the semi-finals. **9.15** **Play to the Whistle.** Holly Willoughby hosts the sports-based comedy panel show, with guests Piers Morgan, Danny Cipriani and Katherine Ryan joining the regulars. Last in the series. **10.00** **ITV News;** Weather. **10.15** **Film: Run Fat Boy Run.** (2007) A man who regrets leaving his fiancée standing at the altar tries to prove his love for her by running a marathon. Romantic comedy, with Simon Pegg. **12.10** Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

- 6.10** The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** The King of Queens. (R) **7.00** Volkswagen Racing Cup. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Superhumans Show. **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Haydock Park, Goodwood and York. **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. **5.30** Homes by the Med. **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Grand Designs: Living in the City.** Kevin McCloud presents one of four special programmes inspired by 15 years of Grand Designs. He begins with a look at the challenges of self-building in the city, where space is at a premium and architects have to be at their most ingenious. Kevin uses footage from the best urban builds from the show over the years, meets pioneers at the forefront of the latest architectural thinking and looks at clever innovations that continue to transform people's lives to reveal which designs work best and why. (R) **8.00** **Jutland: WWI's Greatest Sea Battle.** Re-examining the events of the First World War naval battle, as the grandson of the admiral who led the British forces tries to salvage his grandfather's reputation. **9.00** **Film: The Hunger Games.** (2012) A totalitarian future-America holds an annual nationally televised event in which two children from each of its regions fight to the death until only one remains. A teenage girl takes her younger sister's place in the games and must pit her wits against the deadly combat skills of her rivals. Sci-fi adventure based on Suzanne Collins' novel, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson and Elizabeth Banks. **11.50** **Film: Savages.** (2012) Two marijuana dealers attract the attention of a Mexican drug cartel that kidnaps their shared girlfriend. Crime drama, starring Aaron Taylor-Johnson. **2.05** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.10** The Three Day Nanny. (R) **5.05** Posh Pawnbrokers. (R)

CHANNEL 5

- 6.00** Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.30** The Saturday Show Live. **11.30** Funniest Fails, Fails & Flops. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **4.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.00** **Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Agents Stewart and Vic experience one of the most violent cases they have ever faced when they are confronted by an angry older gentleman. (R) **6.55** **5 News Weekend.** **7.00** **Cricket on 5.** England v Sri Lanka. Highlights from the third day of the First Test in a three-match series, which takes place at Headingley. Presented by Mark Nicholas, who also commentates alongside Michael Vaughan, Geoffrey Boycott, and Simon Hughes. **8.00** **NCIS: Los Angeles.** Three men stage a raid on a drug deal, taking a suitcase full of cash and killing the dealer and an undercover LAPD officer. While studying footage taken from CCTV equipment in the house, Sam recognises the distinctive hand signals of one of the suspects as being those of Navy Seal Kurt Holgate, who he served with in Bosnia. Eric studies the details of his unit and finds that a man called Jackson has been unaccounted for since the day of the attack. (R) **9.00** **NCIS.** Gibbs and the team investigate when the first openly gay Navy lieutenant set to receive the Medal of Honour is murdered. **9.55** **NCIS: New Orleans – Murder in the Bayou.** Double bill. When the body of a former agent washes ashore in New Orleans, Gibbs believes the murder could be linked to a case the victim had previously worked on. DiNozzo, McGee and the FBI continue to track political connections to the case of the murder of a former agent, while Bishop sends DiNozzo a souvenir. **11.30** **True Crimes: The First 72 Hours.** The body of a Toronto property broker is found in a utility closet at her office, and one of her colleagues suggests police turn their attention to a former maintenance worker. (R) **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** BAMMA 25: Champion vs Champion.

DIGITAL

- BBC Four** **7.00** Francesco's Venice **8.00** The World's Most Expensive Stolen Paintings **9.00** Hinterland **10.30** BBC: The Secret Files **2.11.30** Rod Stewart at the BBC **12.30** Rod Stewart Live at Hyde Park **1.30** Top of the Pops: 1981 **2.50** Rod Stewart at the BBC **3.50** Close **ITV2** **11.20** Britain's Got Talent **12.40** Britain's Got More Talent **1.40** Catchphrase **2.20** Scorpion **3.15** **Film:** Kangaroo Jack (2003) **4.15** **Film:** Kangaroo Jack (2003) **5.05** **Film:** Back to the Future (1985) **6.05** **Film:** Back to the Future (1985) **7.20** **Film:** Uncle Buck (1989) **8.20** **Film:** Uncle Buck (1989) **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.15** Celebrity Juice **11.05** Family Guy **12.35** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.20** @ elevenish **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** **ITV2** Nightscreen **ITV3** **12.30** Sherlock Holmes: The Sign of Four **2.50** Foyle's War **4.50** A Touch of Frost **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.00** Trial & Retribution **1.05** Northern Lights **2.00** **ITV3** Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4** **11.30** Pawn Stars **12.00** **Film:** Death of a Gunfighter (1969) **1.05** **Film:** Death of a Gunfighter (1969) **2.00** Live FIA Formula E Championship. The Berlin ePrix. **4.30** Pawn Stars **5.00** **Film:** The Apollonia (1966) **6.10** **Film:** The Apollonia (1966) **7.00** **Film:** Casino Royale (1967) **8.10** **Film:** Casino Royale (1967) **9.50** River Monsters **10.50** **Film:** State of Play (2009) **11.00** **Film:** State of Play (2009) **1.15** Hell on Wheels **2.10** Ax Men **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.30** The Goldbergs **1.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** **Film:** Leap Year (2010) **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film:** Attack the Block (2011) **10.45** Gogglebox **12.55** The Inbetweeners **1.55** Rude Tube **2.50** Gogglebox **3.45** Rules of Engagement **4.30** Rude(ish) Tube **4.55** Revenge **Film4** **11.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **1.00** Hairspray (2007) **3.15** Sword of Sherwood Forest (1960) **4.55** Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **6.40** Tootsie (1982) **9.00** Bridesmaids (2011) Comedy, starring Kristen Wiig. **11.30** Case 39 (2009) **1.40** Boomerang (1992) **4.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Killer Switch, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman accidentally picks up the wrong suitcase from the airport baggage reclaim on her way to her daughter's graduation. Later, she receives a phone call from a man claiming he will harm her daughter if she fails to follow his instructions to return his suitcase. Thriller, starring Jamie Luner. (2016)

TUESDAY

Columbo: A Stitch in Crime, ITV, 11.45pm

A surgeon plans to get rid of his colleague in an experimental drug test, and when his fellow medic needs heart surgery, he performs the operation himself and discreetly arranges some fatal complications. However, when he also murders a nurse who suspects the truth, he attracts the attention of the slovenly sleuth. Crime drama, starring Peter Falk, Leonard Nimoy and Will Geer. (1973)



I Love You, Man, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

WEDNESDAY

Dragonfly, BBC1, 11.45pm

A doctor uses work as a way of coping with his grief over the death of his pregnant wife – but when strange things begin to happen around him, he becomes convinced she is trying to contact him from beyond the grave. Supernatural drama, starring Kevin Costner and Kathy Bates. (2002)

THURSDAY

Reluctant Witness, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Erin believes that she has left her Mob ties behind after being placed in a witness protection programme. However, the man she thought she had killed turns up under an assumed identity and bent on revenge, meaning she must protect her new life and her family. Thriller, starring Mia Kirshner. (2014)

FRIDAY

I Love You, Man, BBC1, 11.50pm

As he prepares for his wedding, estate agent Peter realises there is something missing – a male friend, which he doesn't have, to be his best man. His quest for a suitable candidate leads him to laid-back, hard-drinking Sydney and the pair become inseparable buddies – to the horror of Peter's fiancée. Comedy, starring Paul Rudd and Jason Segel. (2009)

Sisters are hoping to rise to the challenge

Let's face it, we'd all love to be able to have our cake and eat it – but is that really possible?

When it comes to healthy eating, sisters Jasmine and Melissa Hemsley claim it is, and now they are trying to teach us all how to do it via this series, which began a couple of weeks ago.

Over the years, many TV chefs have attempted to teach us how to prepare low-calorie and low-fat versions of our favourite recipes, and while we may start out with good intentions, we have a tendency to fall back into our old ways before long, perhaps because some of the ideas they have adopted are too complicated or involve ingredients we either don't have lying around or are impossible to get at your average supermarket.

But the Hemsley girls are different. There's nothing weird about their cookery lessons, but the results are rather wonderful.

Their aim isn't to blind us with science, but rather to teach their fans how to develop a good relationship with food while instructing them in the fine art of gut health.

They learnt their trade by catering for such starry clients as Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Vivienne Westwood, and are now devoted to preparing food that is natural, satisfying and easy to digest, and which doesn't involve gluten, grains and refined sugar; what's more there's no compromise when it comes to flavour.

The sisters are photogenic, so it should come as no surprise that they've landed this programme. In fact, the only shock is that it's taken them so long to get their own show; it's six years since they began their own business.

"We're delighted to be working with Jasmine and Melissa and bringing their inspiring brand of healthy living to a wider audience," says Andrea Olson, Channel 4's head of factual entertainment and the series' executive producer. "The Hemsleys are a perfect fit for our slate and roster of passionate talent with global appeal."

The ladies themselves were certainly thrilled by the idea of being able to reach more people than ever

before: "Our mouths are watering at the prospect of sharing these tasty, healthy and easy to make recipes with Channel 4's viewers!" said Jasmine at the show's launch, while Melissa added: "I can't wait to see our readers' reaction to our new TV show and this is a fantastic opportunity for us to reach out to a wider audience."

The first episode saw them prepare perfect dishes for sharing with friends, including huevos rancheros with guacamole, slow-cooked lamb with anchovies, and a chocolate dessert.

Last week, they did something seemingly impossible – they turned the usually calorie-packed great British fry-up into a healthy meal before turning their attention to a Filipino dish and a ragu.

This time around, the culinary magicians will demonstrate how to bake gluten-free treats by using alternatives to traditional flour such as ground almonds and coconut flour. They also meet two urban beekeepers in London while on the lookout for a sweet substitute for sugar.



Eating Well with Hemsley + Hemsley, Monday, Channel 4, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Secrets of the Nazi Occult

Channel 5, 9pm

Documentaries about the Nazis and their activities are not exactly thin on the ground – stick a pin in any given week and you can usually hit at least one or two tucked away in the TV schedules. While the majority of them seem to cover the same, most obvious areas of study, this one promises to be a little more leftfield. It examines the theory that many members of the Nazi high command, including both Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, were members of a secret society that held top secret meetings and rituals at Wewelsburg Castle in Germany. It sounds like the plot for the next Indiana Jones movie, but evidence suggesting that occult practices were at play is compelling.

TUESDAY

The KKK: Behind The Mask

Channel 5, 9pm

Founded in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) extended into almost every southern state by 1870 and despite not having a well-organised structure or clear leadership, it grew to become the most notorious white supremacist group in America. At its peak in the 1920s it had over four million members, but today it's a shadow of its

former self. However, KKK marches, cross burnings and racial hatred continue in the Deep South states. This eye-opening and stark documentary profiles today's Klan members, examines the impact the group has had on American society over the last 150 years, and asks the question: is the country is heading for a new race war?

WEDNESDAY

Boris v Dave: The Battle for Europe

Channel 4, 9pm

Michael Crick outlines how the ongoing EU Referendum battle between Vote Leave and Britain Stronger in Europe is not only a crusade to determine the UK's future in Europe, but also an intensely personal skirmish between two of Britain's most high-profile politicians. As fellow Tories, former London mayor Boris Johnson and Prime Minister David Cameron are ostensibly allies, but the pair have a long and storied history dating back through their time at Oxford, as members of the exclusive Bullingdon Club, to their shared childhood

at Eton. Making use of interviews with both men's friends, family and political foes, Crick sets out to tell the story of their very public duel, which looks set to define both a nation's future, and the leadership of the Conservative Party.

THURSDAY

How Should I Vote? – The EU Debate

BBC1, 8pm

Victoria Derbyshire hosts a live debate from Glasgow on the issues that matter to young voters ahead of the June 23 referendum on whether or not the UK should stay in the European Union. An audience of voters under the age of 30 from all over the UK will put their questions and concerns direct to a panel of senior politicians central to the campaigns to Leave or Remain in the EU, while viewers can also raise their points and put questions through social media.

The Truth About Alcohol

BBC1, 9pm

Doctor David Abdelmoneim explores



Boris v Dave: The Battle for Europe, Wednesday, Channel 4, 9pm

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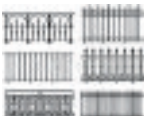
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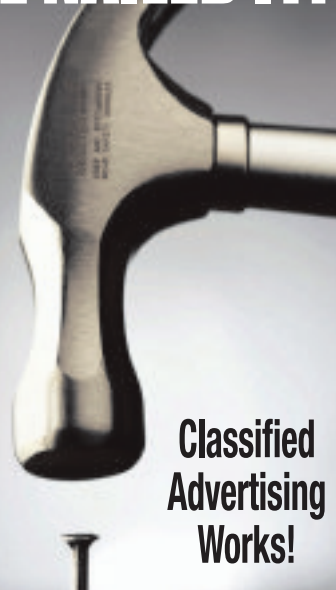
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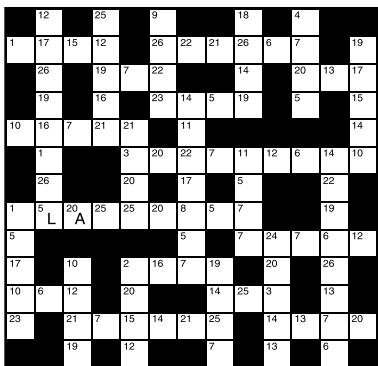
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

R X I M K B O F P Q H V C
Z W G L D N Y U S E T A J

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

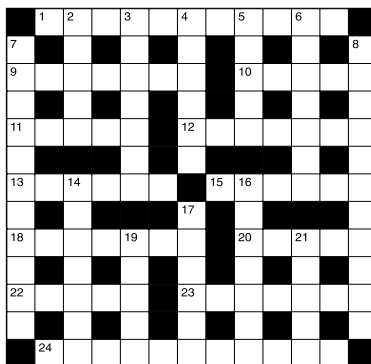
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Used for making up a strange pie (11)
- Streams of invective one gets in some professions (7)
- Illicit photograph? (5)
- Man-made product found in many London stores (5)
- A red tongue (7)
- Reply some Americans were hoping for (6)
- Pat may speak it or wear it (6)
- He makes his mark at times (7)
- The smallest type of slate (5)
- Mince pies having a brown colour (5)
- A painstaking preparation? (7)
- Bert at speed becomes splashed with mud (11)

Down

- In Peru rallies are held in the country (5)
- Term in music, and type of bet (7)
- Possibly run and see to make certain (6)
- Girls lose their heads - the fools! (5)
- Driving a point home? (7)
- This order won't require attention (5,2,4)
- Silent dance arranged in secret (11)
- A high point of religious architecture (7)
- Be as bad as ever about a mistake (7)
- It may be played when not in form (6)
- Seagoing vagabond (5)
- Possibly eager to correspond (5)



Quick Clues:

Across

- Diligence (11)
- Desert (7)
- Female relative (5)
- Boredom (5)
- Graceful (7)
- Infuriate (6)
- Plan (6)
- Type of raisin (7)
- Light purple (5)
- Swift (5)
- Oriental (7)
- Spy (6,5)

Down

- Evident (5)
- Accommodation (7)
- Annul (6)
- Taut (5)
- Intimidate (7)
- Flexible rule (4,7)
- Vane (11)
- Fall back (7)
- Vocation (7)
- Empty (6)
- Viper (5)
- Ancient language (5)

Sudoku

	2		9	8				4
6					2	9		
			5		8		2	
	4		8			3		
		5		9		1		
	6	9			4		2	
4		1	6				5	
		2	4		6			7
5				1	7		8	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	2	9	4	5	1	7	6	3
4	6	3	2	7	8	1	5	
1	7	5	3	6	9	8	4	2
9	3	2	8	4	6	1	5	7
7	5	4	1	3	2	6	9	8
6	1	8	9	7	5	3	2	4
5	4	6	7	9	8	2	3	1
3	8	1	6	2	4	5	7	9
2	9	7	5	1	3	4	8	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Skittles; 5 Form; 9 Coma; 10 Idiot; 11 Skain; 12 Run down; 13 Trial and error; 18 Assuaged; 19 Cuff; 20 Neptune; 21 Lions; 22 Rode; 23 Stranded. Down: 2 Knockers; 3 Tsarina; 4 Endurance test; 6 Outdoor; 7 Mariner; 8 Glance; 13 Trainer; 14 Inspid; 15 League; 16 Ruction; 17 Offence. QUICK - Across: 1 Appendix; 5 Heal; 9 Fret; 10 Strategy; 11 Alter; 12 Nominal; 13 Exceptionally; 18 Confound; 19 Send; 20 Special; 21 Begun; 22 Dull; 23 Symmetry. Down: 2 Perplex; 3 Extreme; 4 Intentionally; 6 Eternal; 7 Loyalty; 8 Layman; 13 Excused; 14 Congrat; 15 Profit; 16 Austere; 17 Langour.

Quiz

- Which royal gave birth to Columbus in 1994?
- Within which present-day country is the ancient Sumerian city of Ur?
- Of what nationality was former UN secretary-general U Thant?
- Which Chinese philosophical terms mean 'dark' and 'bright'?
- Which river forms 1,500 miles of the US-Mexican border?
- What was the pen name of the novelist Marie Henri Beyle?
- Who preceded Peter Mandelson as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland?
- Who wrote The Railway Children in 1906?
- Which Church's doctrine is set out in the Thirty-Nine Articles?
- Which Greek herald lost a shouting contest with Hermes?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Rudolf Hess; 2 Tahiti; 3 Whooping

cough; 4 American football; 5 Superman;

6 Ear; 7 Cleopatra; 8 Turkey; 9 Four

Weddings and a Funeral; 10 Volleyball.

Niner: UNMATCHED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3451 gives a girl's name,
21769 gives a second girl's name,
845461 gives a third girl's name.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Write on – the newly refurbished Mr Bronte's study



Storytime – a family in the garden at Hill Top, near Sawrey, Lake District



Peter Rabbit and friends at The World of Beatrix Potter

Booking in for anniversary of two of literature's great female figures

TWO of English literature's great female figures, **Beatrix Potter** and **Charlotte Bronte**, are commemorated with anniversaries this year.

We travel north to find out more. Wandering around the Lake District's World of Beatrix Potter Attraction, I quickly forget I've ever grown up.

Children and parents are lost in Beatrix's delightful imaginary world, so perfectly illustrated in her books. I traipse through a reconstruction of the Peter Rabbit garden with glee, spying Jemima Puddle-Duck and a bronze statue of three children unveiled by Renee Zellweger in 2006.

The Windermere attraction is gearing up to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Beatrix's birth with a series of events, including a live-action show of her stories per-

By **Nicholas McAvaney**

formed during the summer months.

In fact, attractions all over the region have plans to honour the early 20th century children's author.

Continuing my journey across Lake Windermere, I stop at the Beatrix Potter Gallery in Hawkshead where originals of her intricate watercolour illustrations are on display.

The inspiration for many of her stories was her beloved home Hill Top, in nearby Sawrey. Here I learn some intriguing facts about the author who I had always presumed was a kind old lady, fond of children and animals.

She was in fact a shrewd businesswoman and her books were merely a revenue stream to acquire and maintain a sizeable real estate portfolio in the Lake District.

She eventually bequeathed a number of the properties to the National Trust in her will.

Copies of Beatrix's stories have been carefully placed around the house, bookmarked at pages where a room or items in it feature. Returning to the grown-up world, my journey ends at the adjacent Tower Bank Arms, a pub owned by the National Trust but managed independently. The manager gives me a lengthy spiel about the wide range of ales available.

Quaint

Moving on . . . strolling along Haworth's main street, I stop every few metres for a photo of the quaint stone shop fronts and postcard-worthy views over the Yorkshire Moors. I find it hard to imagine the village was once a crowded industrial town and a cesspool of death and disease during the early 19th century period, when English lit-

erature's great Bronte sisters lived here. At that time, the average age of death was 24. The girls' father, Patrick, played a pivotal role in helping clean up the village's water supply. But his own children failed to benefit, as they passed away before him.

His valiant efforts are documented at the Bronte Parsonage, the Bronte's former family home, now a museum. I visit to find out more about the tragedy-tinged lives of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and their brother Branwell.

It's 200 years since Charlotte was born, and a special exhibition aims to further explore her life. Each night the sisters would meet at the dining table to comment on each other's work. Their portable writing tables are on display, along with the chair on which Emily succumbed to illness in 1848, only 12 months after her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, was published.

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Celebrate at the Windsor Castle Inn

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

THE Windsor Castle Inn celebrates its 10th anniversary this year.

Home to Sadler's Ales Brewery, the Windsor Castle Inn in Lye is the tap house to Sadler's Ales.

The brewery began in 1900, founded by Nathaniel Sadler who also opened his own tap house called The Windsor Castle which closed in the 1920s.

In 2006 John Sadler, grandson of the founder, re-opened The Windsor Castle Inn. Emily, daughter of John Sadler, and her husband Gareth Bedford now own and run the Windsor Castle Inn. Over the years they have extended and refurbished the pub and restaurant. It is still proud to be the tap house for Sadler's Brewery and serves 10 craft beers which are all brewed on site.

The Windsor Castle Inn has a five star health and hygiene award from Dudley Council and a fantastic reputation for its food. Andre Pelaud leads a team of elite and passionate chefs. The pub food is so popular that it is always advisable to book a table. The menu has something for everyone and every Friday is Gluten Free.

They also serve breakfasts every Saturday 9am to 11am. The Windsor Castle Inn also has a four star bed and breakfast facility.

To celebrate 10 years, the Windsor is holding special events throughout the year, the first one is a Peaky Blinder Weekend on May 28 to 30.

Gareth said: "We are proud to serve the Black Country and welcome both old and new customers to celebrate our tenth year".



Windsor Castle Inn owner Gareth Bedford and head chef Andre Pelaud



The Windsor Castle Inn, Lye, is the tap house to Sadler's Ales



Splendid extended semi-detached family house

A splendid extended semi-detached family home in a popular location in Dingle Close, Oakham, Dudley, lies in a cul-de-sac just off the Oakham Road.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £274,995.

Having double glazing and central heating, it has driveway parking for at least three cars, an entrance lobby, an entrance hall with stairs

OAKHAM, DUDLEY

£274,995

off, a downstairs WC, an open plan lounge/dining room to the front, a through room with doors to the rear garden, a utility area, a modern fitted kitchen with breakfast bar and with a family room off.

On the first floor there are five good sized bedrooms (three with wardrobes and the master en-suite) and a house bathroom/WC with bath with a separate shower.

The rear garden has decking, lawn and a further play area.

For further information contact Trinity Property on 01384 213395 or visit www.trinityproperty.net

Modern home within walking distance of town centre

OLDBURY

£149,950

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A modern end-of-terrace house, 1 Astle Drive, Oldbury, is in a quiet cul-de-sac within walking distance of the town centre.

Having good road and rail links, making it ideal for commuting, the property is for sale with no chain.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, a guest WC, a kitchen with beech finished units with contrasting working surfaces, a built-in dishwasher, washer/dryer, oven, four-plate gas hob and extractor, fridge/freezer and splashback and floor tiling. The lounge has French doors; bedroom one is en suite and there are two further bedrooms and bathroom, a driveway, garage and garden.

Contact Tom Giles on 0121 5526171 or visit www.tomgiles.net



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COVENTRY, Underhill Close£1,300 pcm+Fees
A great opportunity to rent this well presented modern 4 bedroom detached property is the sought after location of Fisham/parish of Baginbun area, current offered grade: Outstanding on January 21st 2015. This double glazed, gas central heated house has entrance hall, cloakroom, large lounge, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, 4 good size bedrooms with 1 en-suite shower, 3 with fitted wardrobes, family bathroom, garage, driveway & low maintenance garden. EPC: D



SUTTON GOLDFIELD, Lichfield Road£795 pcm+Fees
A delightful ground floor two bedroom apartment with an en-suite to master. The property has excellent links to Birmingham City Centre, being located a short walk from the railway station, is gas centrally heated and double glazed and is located in a quiet complex with secure allocated parking. No Pets, no DSS, EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Meadowbrook Road£775 pcm+Fees
Large 3 bed micklow style semi-detached property features: 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single bathroom with shower, garage (storage only), private rear garden, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heated and double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutley Primary School. EPC: TBC



WITHYMOOR, Aldeford Drive£725 pcm+Fees
Well presented semi detached house situated on this popular estate. Occupying a quiet cul de sac location. Featuring an attractive lounge with breakfast kitchen to the rear. To the 1st floor there are 3 bedrooms and a family bathroom, whilst to the outside there are gardens to front and rear. In addition, there is a garage and drive, and the property benefits from gas fired central heating and double glazing. Not to be missed! EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Mayfield Road£695 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished detached bungalow set in a quiet cul-de-sac in this very popular residential area close to schools and bus links. Featuring large lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, a further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. A property to be seen and appreciated. EPC: TBC



BRIERLEY HILL, Hern Road£650 pcm+Fees
A detached bungalow in this quiet popular location having a large lounge/dining area, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, shower room, front & rear gardens, garage & large driveway to front, gas central heating, double glazing. EPC: D



WOLVERHAMPTON, Chelston Drive£650 pcm+Fees
A 3 bedroom detached home located in a quiet cul de sac location and benefits gas central heating and double glazing. The accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, garage and paved driveway. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Hayley Green£625 pcm+Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. A superb luxury ground floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner with balcony, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, a further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



BIRMINGHAM, St Pauls Square£600 pcm+Fees
A part furnished ground floor studio apartment. The apartment is ready for immediate occupation has accommodation (accessed via secure concierge entrance) to comprise a hallway, fitted bathroom suite with shower over, bedroom area with fitted wardrobes, open plan kitchen/lounge area with fitted appliances, including fridge, oven, hob and washing machine. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Portsdown Road£595 pcm+Fees
A well presented 3 bedroom semi detached house in sought after location. The property is offered unfurnished and comprises of, hall, guest wc, lounge, fitted dining kitchen, 3 bedrooms and bathroom with shower, low maintenance rear garden driveway and gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: E



HAGLEY, Newlands Close £595 pcm+Fees
A superb modern ground floor apartment located near to Hagley Village & situated close to motorway links, open plan lounge/kitchen with appliances, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes and en-suite shower room & 1 large single bedroom, white bathroom suite, allocated parking, secure entry system. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Clifton Road £575 pcm+Fees
A property not to be missed! Set within a quiet cul-de-sac, a lovely mid terraced property which is ideal for local shops, Rowley Regis Train Station and the M5 J2, comprising of: 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, good size lounge, modern kitchen, house bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway parking for 3 cars, small rear garden. EPC: D



STOURBRIDGE, King William Street£575 pcm+Fees
Refurbished mid terraced house close to town centre comprising of: 2 reception rooms, large kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, downstairs bathroom with shower and a rear garden. A lovely property not to be missed! EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Willets Drive£575 pcm+Fees
An immaculately presented mid terrace property situated within a sought after and convenient location. This house features living room, modern refitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom and an easy to maintain rear garden with views of Clent. Also benefiting from gas central heating, double glazing and communal parking. EPC: G



ROWLEY REGIS, Beeches Road£575 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished mid terraced house, ideally located for local shops, buses and train station. Briefly comprising of: Front lounge, fitted dining kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, shower room, gas central heating, maintenance free rear garden. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive£525 pcm+Fees
Located within walking distance of central Halesowen. This modern unfurnished 3rd floor apartment, briefly comprising of: spacious living room with a door leading to your own balcony, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, communal gardens, allocated parking space. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Mildred Way£525 pcm+Fees
Beautifully presented and located in a quiet road, is this Victorian house comprising of: porch, lounge, fitted kitchen with appliances and granite work tops, double bedroom, fully tiled bathroom with shower, study, gas central heating (under floor heating to kitchen & bathroom) double glazing, communal gardens and allocated parking. Available Now! EPC: TBC



KIDDERMINSTER, Patin House£525 pcm+Fees
A 1 bedroom ground floor apartment set in a converted Victorian house comprising of: porch, lounge, fitted kitchen with appliances and granite work tops, double bedroom, fully tiled bathroom with shower, study, gas central heating (under floor heating to kitchen & bathroom) double glazing, communal gardens and allocated parking. Available Now! EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN/COLLEY GATE, Ladysmith Road£495 pcm+Fees
A mid terraced house in a sought after area for Colley Lane Primary School, bus links to Halesowen and Stourbridge. This house features 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, dining area, new downstairs shower room, 2 good size bedrooms, bathroom, double glazing, gas central heating, rear garden. EPC: TBC



DUDLEY, Moncrieff Close £450 pcm+Fees
A top floor 1 bedroom flat available in the heart of Dudley comprising of lounge, fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom and bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: D



OLDBURY, Causeway Green Road£450 pcm+Fees
Deceptively large and spacious. A split level apartment above local shops, within walking distance to bus links for Lantley and Oldbury and close to J2 of the M5 comprises gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear, with the added bonus of a porch, unfurnished. EPC: D

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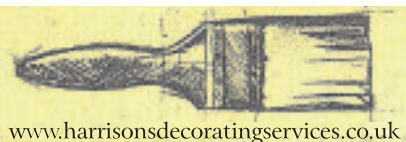
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LOST TABBY female cat, dark brown, white paws, yellow collar, 2 years old, since March 30, near Windsor Ave, Penn. 07941 617225

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY SCOOTERS from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

boats & water sports



RIVER CRUISER
4 Berth Cruiser with Aft cabin, 1.5 diesel engine. Hot and cold water, Shower and Toilet.
Possible mooring available River Avon near Pershore / Tewkesbury
£12,500 ono.
07791 424815.

caravans / motorhomes

ABI STATIC CARAVAN
Three bedroom, 35 x 10, Mid Wales, site fees included for 2016, dog friendly.
£3,800.
07922 351352 no texts.

ADRIA ADIVA Four berth tourer, motorhome, roll out awning, one owner from new under floor heating, £3,000. 01902 896873.

BAILEY BARCELONA

2011, 4 berth,
Twin axle with double motor mover, in excellent condition.
Fixed bed, end washroom, fridge freezer,
With many extras, including Isabella porch awning and annex, carpet, TV.
Water containers, serviced yearly.
£12,750 ono.
01922 615823.

SOLAR PANEL 30 watt.
£150
01902 845103.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

SWIFT UTOPIA 530
2002, 4-berth.
Truma gas / electric heating / water/ gas.
Elec fridge, Full gas cooker, End bathroom, Shower, Flush toilet, Wash hand basin.
Wine cabinet.
JVC stereo CD.
Full awning.
Directional ariel, Step.
Serviced July.
Little use.
Ready to go.
£5,000 ono.
07941 801230.

VW CAMPERVAN
High top, 1988, 1.9 petrol, excellent original condition, genuine 67,800 miles, full MoT
£6,250 ovno.
07966 584884.

WILLERBY LEVEN 35X12
3 bedroom static caravan, sited in Mid-Wales on a quiet holiday park. Fully equipped, site fees paid for 2016 season March -

October
£4,000
07960 841376

caravans wanted

WANTED CARAVAN WANTED

Cash on pick up asap.

Call me on

07717090817.
CARAVAN WANTED Modern.
Call 01905 621226 or
07967 828448.

fishing

FISHING TACKLE for sale, everything must go. Will not split. £200.
01384 242497 after 2pm.
FISHING TACKLE wanted anything considered. New or Old 01902 754011 or 07931 568716

jumble sales / fetes

BRIC-A-BRAC FAIR
Sunday 22nd May
KINVER COMMUNITY CENTRE
DYE 76R
10.30am - 4pm
Tel: 01384 894464

sports & leisure

FreeAds

IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk
SET OF LEFT handed golf clubs, bag, trolley and water proofs. £100 the lot. 01902 679101.

holidays

caravan holidays

WANTED ALL CARAVANS
Any age or condition
Also motorhomes wanted.
TOP PRICES PAID
Immediate collection.
CALL THOMAS
07776373150

what's on

markets

STOURBRIDGE CAR BOOT
At Stourbridge Rugby Club
Open every Wednesday from 18th May
07957 399964

BESCOT SUNDAY MARKET
OPEN EVERY SUNDAY
Banks's Stadium, Walsall FC
WS1 3SA, FREE PARKING, J9 M6
07839 575701 All hard standing

3 Home & Services

furniture

LEATHER THREE piece suite, terra-cotta, good condition, £100.
07935 937746.

THREE PIECE SUITE cream fabric, immaculate condition, must be seen. £150. 01902 673844.

household appliances

FRIDGE FREEZER in excellent working order, £85 can deliver. 07493 919511.

photography & camcorders

CANON 60D, Body only, Mint Condition. Low use. With useful accessories. Boxed. £300. 07875 586176.

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL & TV SPECIALISTS: FREE Estimates on any TV Repairs, Plasma, LCD, 3D, LED, Projection. All areas covered 8 till late, 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation, Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

UPVC WHITE double glazed window, 71in x 41 1/2, includes vertical blind, £70 ono. 07810 313466.

items wanted

ALL GOLD BCT UP TO £300 PER OUNCE CASH PAID TODAY
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Jewellery • Doulton • Worcester Moorcroft • Lladro • Old coins
• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY
• Diamonds and Gold Coins • Clocks • Paintings
• ALL SILVER • All Oriental Items
Pre 47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
HOUSE CLEARANCES
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby / Bachmann / Bowmans / Roundhouse / Graham / Farsh / any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
0121 532 2544/07891 713547.
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

ALL BRASS / COPPER ornaments/ brassware, all descriptions, miners lamps, old medals, dinky, corgi toys. 01902 745598.

MAMOD STEAM engines/trains wanted all conditions, railway collections, Dinky, Corgi vehicles, any condition. 01902 745598.

OLD BIBLES Wanted, pre 1900, for Private buyer. Fair prices paid. Distance no object. Telephone 0115 973 5662.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

RECORDS WANTED
50's, 60's, 70's, Rock, Punk, Rock / Roll, Jazz / 90's Indie. Collections bought.
Music Memorabilia, Promo Posters, autographs, etc, etc.
Top prices paid.
Telephone 07966 252439.

WANTED
Car, motorbike, tractor and truck sales leaflets, brochures, books, handbooks, manuals, models and old motorbike or scooter.
01743 718323.

WANTED SMALL Cultivator in working order.
01902 755200.

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and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.

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specialists at your service

aerials

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1 AERIAL INTO 2 ROOMS £90
WE WILL BEAT ANY WRITTEN QUOTE
Work Guaranteed
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

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DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including:
Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

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A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
OAP discount. Recession Prices.
Unbeatable Value: Rooms cleaned from £10
Call Paul 07870 341089

fencing

ClassifiedAds

PORTWAY FENCING
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

IT WORKS FOR ME

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"

Michael -
Portway Fencing.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by **Express & Star**

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 days of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards **£695**
Heavy duty panels supplied and fitted.
6x6 H/D Treated panels £15.95
6x3 Feather edge panels £18.95
3 foot concrete posts £3.95
12 inch x 6 foot gravel boards £7.95
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

Tidy Fencing

Established 2001
We are fully insured
NPTC qualified and all work comes with a 12 month warranty.
SPECIAL RATES
available to senior citizens.
No job too small.
BIG SPRING DISCOUNT NOW AVAILABLE
Shed refits now available!
01384 620 072
07908 478 962

gardening services

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086

gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

house clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST CASH PRICE PAID
for house clearances and bereavements.
Shops, Schools and Commercial clearances
Also removals undertaken.
All rubbish removed. Carriers licence held
07852 172641 / 07710 360327

painters & decorators

DECORATOR
All domestic work undertaken
Reliable & Affordable
Special rates for OAPs
No job too SMALL
Call
07957 346 059

C.C. PAINTING & DECORATING
best quotes around. OAPs 20% off.
07874 814922 / 01902 632651.

plastering

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING SERVICES.For All Your Home Improvements. Over 30 Years Experience.
Call Mark 07741 770 897.

removals

A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN. Removals, clearances, large/small. 01902 741546, 07899 635852.

Stourbridge Removals

20+ YEARS EXP
Home, Office, Part loads, landlord clean & repair service. House clearances. Quality service guaranteed lowest rates
Call John - 07802 876 876
office - 01562 640 640

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T L Fowkes Roofing & Building Solutions
FREE QUOTATIONS ON REQUEST call or email
07896 334 946
t.fowkes@yahoo.co.uk
Experts in all roofing and building aspects including:
• Flat roofing • GRP roofing • Slate and tile roofing
• uPVC and all major building works

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

skip hire

ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE IT WORKS FOR ME

Thanks to our
Classified advertising
in the Express & Star
we are really busy!
It definitely
works for us!

Grinsells Skip Hire.

FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL

01902 319 191

Brought to you by **Express & Star**

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE LTD.
Mini, midi, maxi, large skips. Fast, friendly & reliable service. Monday to Saturday, 6 day service. Call: 0121 555 6060.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR RIFLES, SHOT GUNS, Antique guns, taxidermy- big bore guns, traps etc wanted. 07888 624202

vets

Express & Star

**THIS SPACE
COULD BE
PROMOTING
YOUR
BUSINESS**

Every day our
customers get a
great response
from Classified
Advertising.

So could you by
calling our friendly
experienced Sales
Advisors on
01902 319191.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

THREE KITTENS 2 female, 1 male, black and white. £30 to ensure good homes. 01902 218944.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

business services

Did the technology boom of the new millennium pass you by?

Supplying friendly, personal & professional IT services to get you started or back on track. We also offer spreadsheet & bespoke database design services

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www.it-techno-phones.co.uk
enquiries@it-techno-phones.co.uk

6 Property

accommodation to let

A FURNISHED studio flat, Claregate, available now to employed, single, mature, responsible person, inc most bills, secure parking, £350pcm. 07957 595840.

A TWO BEDROOM flat, over 50's, Penn Wolverhampton, £450pcm. Wednesfield HA 01902 463605.

NOTICE TO READERS it is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

FURNISHED 1 bed flat, Warstones, recent refurb, close to amenities, suit working couple/single. £400 pcm. 07869 104264.

ONE BED unfurnished flat, Dudley, new decor and carpets Available May 14, £30 p.w. 01384 286431.

SELF CONTAINED bedsit to let, near Asda, Wolverhampton. Private bathroom and kitchen. £360pcm all inc. 07894 911638.

SMART ROOMS in shared house, Netherton, from £85, pwk Single, £95, pwk DBL inc bills. No DSS. 07970 717139.

WILLENHALL, WALSALL Bloxwich houses and rooms to let.
07825 581676.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

SELL IT FAST SELL IT LOCAL

01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

properties wanted

Home Cash Buyer

Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required

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Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

7 Jobs

courses

TAMWORTH: 2-3 JUNE TELFORD: 3-4 SEPT. BIRM'HAM: 15-16 AUG. STOKE: 17-18 SEPT.

Learn how to take blood TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - Certificate in Phlebotomy
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

More info. or to book: www.geospace.com
Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD - Research - Overseas

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

AUDI Q5 SE 2.0 TDI
Quattro Auto Estate, 27 March 2011, met grey, memory heated sports seats, park plus, 122,000 miles, MoT December, some marks and chips but good condition for mileage. £12,650.
07495 628555/01743 248656.

BMW 318i CONVERTIBLE 1999, red, 35k, very good condition, 1 owner, 11 months MoT, includes hard top, £5,000. 01384 288712.

SELLING YOUR CAR?
We have a package to suit every budget.
Packages start from as little as
£21.00 for 6 nights Plus
6 nights free if you do not sell.
CALL 01902 317878

FORD FOCUS Titanium, 1.6 TDCi, 2010, MoT March 24, 2017, 91,000 miles, any inspection, £4,250. 01902 789597, 07597 56731.

FORD FOCUS Titanium, 1.6 TDCi, 2010, MoT March 24, 2017, 91,000 miles, any inspection, £4,250. 01902 789597, 07597 56731.

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commercial vehicles

VAUXHALL CORSA VAN Ecotex, 1300 CDTi, 2007, 86,000 miles, FSH, 7 months MoT. Two owners from new. First to see will buy. Immaculate in/out. £2,300 ono. 07872 949729.

driving tuition

Homer's
10 Hours £99! Five Hours £50! 2 Hours £20! All Areas Covered. AD/POI REQUIRED. Gift vouchers available for £10. 07432 488100 / 01562 870050. 01824 224854 / 0121 5640090. 01902 880065. www.homersdriving.school.co.uk

motorbikes

HONDA CBR 600 1999, exceptional condition, very low miles, just over 15,000, MoT'd, wants for nothing, recent tyres, chain and sprockets, sold with extras. £2,200 o.n.o. 07943 120733.

KAWASAKI GTR1000 H reg, 17,000 miles from new, immaculate condition, £1,275 ono.
YAMAHA MAJESTY 400cc scooter, 04 reg, 40,000 miles, £900 ono.
Telephone 07877 722908.

TWO BIKE TRAILER superb build, ramp, spare wheel, locking hitch, galvanised, £650. 01902 741598.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

MCB
TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
Tel: 01902 408176
1000's of parts available at all times
MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Evening 07813 184611 Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash. Top prices paid. HP settled. Buyer could call.
01562 741083 / 07831 245313

BMW 32 convertible red or grey, or Mazda MX5, must be reasonable price and in good condition. 01902 620406.

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, 01902 597303.

spares & accessories

tyres / wheels / exhausts

TYRES For Vauxhall Astra, x 4, 185/65/15, as new, 1 part work, £25 each, also 155/60/13, part work, £10. 07866 750420.

Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

WANTED, CLASSIC CARS. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC CARS. Private cash buyer. Instant cash settlement. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

10 Personal

LADIES
Bored, lonely, don't be. I'm 70, fit and single.

Please write to
Box Number P20354, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

LADIES
Bored, lonely, don't be. I'm 70, fit and single.

LADY, 70'S
Tall, slim, non smoker, wishes to meet tall gentlemen. Friend for days out, holidays and happy times together.
Box Number P20353, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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Single Women

KATHY, 45, curvy blonde seeking reliable honest man who can get me out of this rut I am stuck in, open to new ideas and looking for someone special? Give me a try. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422263

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box No: 419673

FEMALE, looking for an honest, caring, easygoing male. I am divorced and like walks, going for meals, cinema and love dogs. Text only Mailbox: 4539974

KIM, 32yrs, attractive blonde lady seeks discreet gent for days out, holidays. Tel No: 0906 515 3003 Box No: 421657

JOANNA, 49 years old, looking to meet a man for friendship 50/60 years old. Text only Mailbox: 5428223

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

LORRAINE bored 36yr old looking for discreet no strings fun with likeminded uncomplicated male, any age/looks/status. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422241

LUCY first time advertiser, 32yrs, tall slim blonde airline worker, seeks discreet gent, any status for casual fling. Looks/age unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box: 420237

SARA, 39, home owner, likes animals, tattoos and texting, looking for friendship hopefully leading to more. Get in touch! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421455

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

LUCY, 49, just looking to enjoy life, can you help? seeks fun and good times in or out, nothing heavy just no strings meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422223

KAREN, 43yrs, attractive and broadminded, seeks no strings fun with chap any age, must be discreet. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 407953

JESSIE, sophisticated, well educated brunette lady, 38yrs, WLTm man of any age for discreet chats, meetings and more. Age/looks unimportant must have SOH. Box 4107857

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

CHRISTINE, 48, petite blue eyed brunette, attractive, many varied interests, looking for honest, caring, N/S romantic guy with GSOH to make my life complete again. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421245

MARILYN blue eyed curvy just right female, 36, loves music, good wine, romantic strolls, cosy nights in, WLTm like-minded romantic for quality times. Age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422227

CAROLINE, bored housewife 42, seeking a little excitement. Are you 30+ and discreet, if so ping me a text and give me a few details. Box: 4078682

JACKIE, 49, dark hair, green eyes, cuddly build, likes going out, gym, reading, looking for an honest gentleman for friendship/possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422257

MANDY divorced independent 46yrs old, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421841

FEMALE seeks male to wine and dine me, and treat me like a lady, aged between 50 and 60. Text only Mailbox: 5444115

BROWN eyed brummie female, smoker, likes music, cinema, meals out, WLTm white male for LTR. Text only Mailbox: 4400185

SHARON 49, med to well built, cuddly, young at heart, happy, easygoing, loves the coast and seaside looking for honest friendly male. Text only Mailbox: 5444189

ROSEMARY early 50s, GSOH, likes meals out, travel, etc, looking for man to share these things with. N/S. Text only Mailbox: 5079890

SUE 40s female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421809

46YR old Asian lady looking for friendship maybe more with white male 50+ Text only to Mailbox: 5404865

REBECCA tall slim elegant long legged romantic, sensual, professional, lots to offer, seeks similar male who also appreciates the finer things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421583

SUE, 39, slim feminine brunette, caring, fun loving, independent, no ties, OHAC, loves cooking, WLTm willing male to get to know and spend quality times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421617

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421567

TALL leggy slim brunette 37, attractive and very much single, WLTm fun loving guy 40-50yrs who loves food, wine, cosy nights in or out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422029

PRETTY, very fit, young 49 year old female, no baggage, seeks fit, refined male, n/s, with young outlook, for evenings out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421977

CILLA, 40, tall blue eyed size 12 brunette, loves horses, countryside/ beach walks, cosy nights in/ front of fire, good wine/food, WLTm similar male who appreciates my interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422121

TINA, 43, young looking attractive single female looking for love, with similar lonely heart resorting to advertising in the hope of finding love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421613

ANNA, 41, new to single life seeking caring professional male for no strings fun, attention and laughter. Life is too short, lets enjoy it! Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421217

LOVELY lady inside and out, likes music, art, days out, countryside, poetry, model railways, socialising, DVDs, looking for a kind hearted gent, 52+, with a caring nature and GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421935

FEMALE, 60s, young looking for my age, likes singing, dancing, meals in and out, theatre, fun to be with. Single would like to meet the same. Text only Mailbox: 5448634

ATTRACTIVE, slim woman looking for fun and excitement with guy 35-40 plus text. Text only Mailbox: 5419773

CARING honest female WLTm genuine guy for LTR in Glos/Bristol area. Text mail box only. Text only Mailbox: 4209465

ANDREW 53, widower, honest, genuine, loving, tactile hoping for love again. Text only Mailbox: 5449242

ANDY, young looking 49, 5ft5, slim build, from West Bromwich, areas for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421783

47 year old guy, tall, dark hair, blue eyes, seeks female, 30-42, in the Leamington Spa/Rugby area for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422213

ALWAYS loved it and want to experience an older man, who knows how to make love? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422209

ASIAN gent, 48, kind and caring, wishes to meet lady for chats, weekend outings and LTR, any age/status, age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422181

MALE, 40s, looking for a special lady to spend fun times together and loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421747

44YRS old male, kind, genuine and honest, looking a long term relationship. Text only Mailbox: 5422168

KISSING in depth, do what turns us on? Both unattached, yourself 35 to 40, am kinky, 69, Cancer sign, WLTm for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422177

NICE old-fashioned gent, seeks kind, caring romantic lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416905

18+ and you want to be taught? Teacher glad to teach you, older, experienced guy, gentle and tender. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422203

WIDOWED OAP 82, WLTm lady any age for genuine companionship, togetherness, holidays and more. Can travel or accommodate. Text only Mailbox: 4625673

GUY, 58, 5ft 11ins, looking for slim lady for fun times only meets. Text only Mailbox: 4918364

45 YEAR male with varied interests WLTm female, 35 to 55, for friendship and hopefully more. Text only Mailbox: 4215562

MALE early 60s, young outdoor on life seeks similar 50s early 60s genuine female, slim with GSOH for friendship maybe more. Text only Mailbox: 5443478

PAUL 65yrs, Mobility probs but very caring looking for caring lady 60/70 for friendship and possible LTR. Text only Mailbox: 5456394

BUSINESSMAN, 58, adventurous and broadminded seeks a wild companion for fun and new experiences. Text only Mailbox: 4534092

MALE, 56, slim, 6ft, considerate and caring seeks similar type female to share life with. Text only Mailbox: 5388635

EDDIE, honest, caring, down to earth, likes all kinds of music, going

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Upgrades for Toyota's models built in the UK

By Michael Weston

Toyota's British-built models benefit from some new features for 2016 with improvements to the Toyota Touch 2 multimedia system, retuned hybrid powertrain performance for Auris, and new colour choices.

For Avensis, these changes cap a successful first year on sale, during which time it has proved itself an attractive proposition for both private and fleet/business customers in Europe, offering prestigious, dynamic styling, rich sensory quality inside and out and, thanks to precision chassis and steering engineering, a rewarding experience behind the wheel.

Customers are appreciating the benefits of the improved CO2 performance across the range of powertrains, including the new 1.6 and 2.0-litre Euro 6-compliant diesels, performance that attracts significant tax benefits in the UK and several other European markets, strengthening the car's cost of ownership profile.

The Toyota Touch 2 multimedia system has been upgraded to the latest 2016 specification, which was unveiled at this year's Geneva motor show.

The centrally mounted seven-inch touchscreen now offers revised menu pages for accessing the system's functions and, where the Toyota Touch 2 with Go is installed, for satellite navigation operation.

Access to the My Toyota online customer portal has also been improved.

Toyota Touch 2 with Go has been repackaged as single navigation offering for Auris and Avensis, supplied as standard with three years of free map updates and connection to online services.

The on board connectivity gives easy access to live information services for fuel prices, weather, parking and traffic conditions local to programmed routes, helping with easier and more efficient journey planning.

It also enables use of online information, entertainment and social media apps from Google Search, Google Street-view, Aupeol, Aha and Twitter.

The Auris Hybrid hatchback and Touring Sports wagon are Europe's best-selling hybrid models.

Their driver appeal has been increased with powertrain



retuning that delivers an improved, natural driving experience with no compromise in the cars' highly efficient performance.

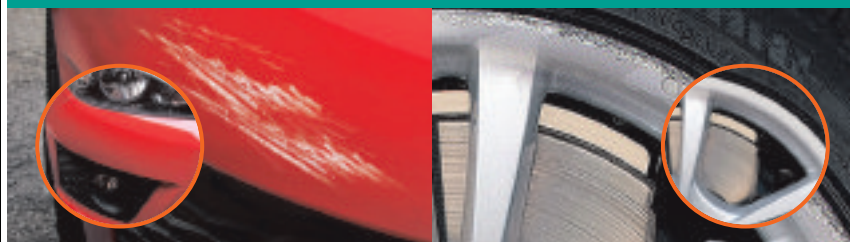
Toyota's engineers have secured a closer alignment between the increase in engine and vehicle speeds, creating a more linear acceleration feel as the driver applies the throttle.

Ensuring Toyota's line-up keeps on-trend, a new Platinum Bronze metallic paint option has been introduced for Avensis and Auris.

Customers can also specify the latest Solid Blue for their new Auris.

The 2016 Avensis and Auris are on sale now.

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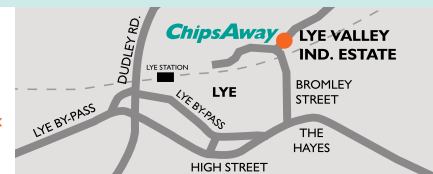
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Heritage Centre open day is blast from the past

Vauxhall Motors' 113 years of history will be laid bare next month as its ever-popular Heritage Centre Open Day is confirmed for 2016.

On Sunday, June 12 Vauxhall's 73-strong collection of vehicles, covering every decade since the company started building cars in 1903, will be open for families and enthusiasts to explore. And best of all, admission is free.

At this year's event Vauxhall will be marking two anniversaries: 50 years since the first Viva HB drove off Ellesmere Port's production line, and 30 years since the last Bedford commercial vehicle was manufactured.

Supporting this, an early SL-model HB will be on display, as well as two CVs that bookended Bedford production: a 1931 2-ton truck and two CFs – a one-off electric model, and a near concours production panel van.

Two new additions to the

collection will also be on show. Completing a set of the first five sporting Astras is a 2009 VXR Nürburgring, which will join our two GTEs, Mk. 3 GSi and Mk. 4 888 Coupe.

And at the opposite end of the spectrum, a 1949 Wyvern L-type also makes its debut at the Open Day. This car – the only left-hooker in the collection – makes a welcome return to the town of its birth after 67 years pounding the roads of Portugal and Holland.

The breadth and quality of Vauxhall's Heritage Collection is near-unique, with most of the cars roadworthy and maintained by a small team, led by Andy Boddy, senior vehicle restorer.

A majority of the cars were also built in Luton, at the famous Kimpton Road plant.

Vauxhall's Heritage Centre Open Day will run from 10am to 4pm. Refreshments will be available throughout the day, and parking is free.

The Heritage Centre is situated behind Vauxhall's Head Office on Park Street, Luton LU1 3HG.



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Van show full of promise

By Sharon Walters

VanExperience Live 2016, the ultimate test drive from Mercedes-Benz Vans, is now officially open for registration from all interested van operators to come to the UK's largest event of its kind, via www.MBVans.co.uk/VEL. Open for all van operators, VanExperience Live promises to be bigger than ever before, with more than 2,500 van operators expected to arrive. Taking place at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire across 10 week days from 20 June to 1 July 2016, VanExperience Live is now celebrating its 13th year.

There will be three main hands-on demonstration areas to help guests assess how Mercedes-Benz vans perform in all areas:

● Drive It – A full range drive to experience the entire product line-up from

Mercedes-Benz Vans, and compare them directly with competitor test vehicles

● Test It – A challenging off-road course to show the skills of the Sprinter 4x4 and 6x6 vehicles

● Trust It – A safety-focused activity, including handling on the all-new wet grip experience

Steve Bridge, managing director of Mercedes-Benz Vans, said: "This is the first time in the event's 13-year history that we are opening up the doors of VanExperience Live to all van operators, to really help them to make their minds up when it comes to assessing their next vehicle purchase – the feedback we receive each year proves the format is the best in the industry."

"We know how important vans are to our guests, and appreciate that many who attend aren't 'van drivers' – they are people who use a van to deliver goods or services, so it is our promise to provide as much support as possible to these UK businesses, enabling them to focus on delivering their customers great service without having to worry about their van. I look forward to seeing many van operators there – from a one-van business, through to some of the biggest fleets in the UK."



I look forward to seeing many van operators there – from a one-van business, to some of the biggest fleets in the UK

With experts available throughout the event to answer any questions, guests can use their time at VanExperience Live to fully understand the range of products and services offered by Mercedes-Benz Vans and how Mercedes-Benz Vans can support their business, including: MobiloVan free roadside assistance; Accessories to personalise any Mercedes-Benz van; GenuineParts and their importance; and the Star Expert team will be on-hand to answer any van-related queries, including product, industry and legislative questions.

A complete display of vehicles will also be available to access, including vans from more than 30 body builder and conversion exhibitors to show how adaptable a van can be.

In addition, guests will have access to all areas of the business, including Management, as the entire Mercedes-Benz Vans UK team relocates to the event for the duration.

● If any van operator would like to attend, they can register their interest by visiting www.MBVans.co.uk/VEL

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Fiat back in fight for sales with Tipo

By Ian Donaldson

IN 1989 Kia and Hyundai were selling modest numbers of cars on the strength of a low price and decently full equipment levels.

That year Fiat was celebrating the crowning of its Tipo as European Car of the Year and the future for this family-sized hatch looked rosy. The successor would surely be better still.

But it never happened. In the 27 years since then the Italian car giant shrunk its range so the tiny 500 now makes the money and Kia and Hyundai no longer make cheap cars, selling instead on value for money.

But now – roll of drums – the next Tipo has arrived and it's built in Turkey to keep costs down and is coming to the UK in September, starting at £12,995 and looking to take on the likes of Kia and Hyundai by costing less and offering more. How about that for table turning.

At the world press launch of the car – ironically in an empty factory in Turin that once made Fiat diesel engines – there was no lack of marketing hype (there never is), promising us that the Tipo is the best value for money on the market.

We shall see, but first signs are promising. It drives like a dearer car, looks smart in a modern mid-European way and comes well kitted out for the money.

But so does the Hyundai i30, to pluck one obvious competitor from the back of your favourite car magazine.

In mainland Europe, where a saloon version of the Tipo has been on sale for a while, they've sold more than 22,000 of them already, helped by a starting price in Spain of £10,200 (even less after a scrappage scheme for old cars, remember that?).

But back to the Tipo in the metal, where we discover a car genuinely spacious enough for a six-footer to sit comfortably behind himself and boots that range from big in the hatch to enormous in the estate. Both are best in class, says Fiat.

We won't be seeing the saloon in the UK because nobody buys them at this end of the market, reserving obvious boots for bigger more prestigious machines with German or Jaguar badges.

Fewer private buyers are going for hatches or estates either, being lured into SUVs instead, but there are evidently enough loyal hatchers to persuade Fiat to invest millions of euros to reenter the market.

In the UK we will have three grades of trim – names to be decided – with even the entry level having standard kit that includes air conditioning, remote central locking, front electric windows, six airbags, DAB radio, Bluetooth and steering wheel remote controls.

The Station Wagon adds £1,000 to the bill as well as roof bars and electric rear windows.

A good sat nav system is a reasonable £500 extra with either body shape.

Move up a trim level (for £1,000) and sat nav drops to £250 because a touch screen infotainment system comes as standard anyway, along with alloy wheels, parking sensors and cruise control.

Another £1,000 (spot the easily grasped 'price walks?') brings us to the top grade, with an increased goodies' count that includes sat nav with traffic service, bigger alloys, rear view camera, auto lights and wipers and climate control.

We will be offered five engines, three petrol (two 1.4s and a 1.6 litres) and a pair of diesels, 1.3 and 1.6 litres, with this smelly fuel duo likely to be the bigger sellers in the UK.

Two different automatic gearboxes are offered, depending on your engine choice, and a decently precise manual six-speed comes as standard.

The more powerful, 120 horsepower diesel (£17,995 in top hatch trim), pulls well and is quiet from start-up, which is far from common.

It also showed 49mpg after an 'honest' test route with steep hills, lots of hairpins and lots of stop/start town work. So, it's not going to cost a fortune to run.

The Tipo rides well too, with a firmly controlled feel and you can detect the special attention Fiat has given the steering, which remains feelsome and pleasantly direct. As ever with the brand, a button makes it lighter for city work, but, as ever, seems redundant.

Jumping into a 1.6 110 horsepower petrol (£16,995 in hatch mid-trim level) the extra eagerness of the engine to rev was a spur to enjoy the scenic and mildly demanding test route, where the car was a lively, willing companion. It showed 36mpg on the clear trip computer, part of a easily read dash that comes complete with big digital speed readout.

Finally, some random details of the newcomer: it has multiple storage compartments scattered round the cabin, the estate will take an object 1.8 metres long, thanks to a body stretched 20cms over the hatch, the rear seats flop forward easily but leave a load floor that is not completely flat... and you can keep up with world news from Reuters in mid range models and above, thanks to a smartphone app.

Good news all round for Fiat? The signs look encouraging.

HALESOWEN MOTOR HOUSE GREAT SELECTION OF USED VEHICLES

PLATE	MODEL	COLOUR	MILEAGE	PRICE
11	Corsa Excite Ac 3dr 1.2	Black	41000	£5295
10	Astra Sxi 5dr	Silver	29092	£5495
60	Corsa Sxi 3dr 1.2	Silver	31708	£5495
61	Corsa Active Ac Ecoflex 3DR	White	25000	£5999
13	Corsa Exclusiv Ac 1.2 5dr	Grey	42000	£5999
61	Corsa S Ac 5dr 1.2	Silver	38728	£6000
12	Corsa Limited Edition 5dr	Red	31219	£6491
61	Corsa Se 5dr 1.4	Black	22800	£6495
62	Corsa Active Ac	White	18423	£6495
13	Corsa Energy Ac 3dr 1.2	Blue	17847	£6999
63	Corsa 5Dr HAT 1.2i VWT Energy	Pepperdust	10475	£6999
63	Corsa Energy Ac 3DR	Red	5839	£7295
13	Corsa Se 1.4 5dr	Grey	12023	£7495
13	Meriva Exclusive 5dr	Grey	20119	£7495
64	Corsa 3Dr HAT 1.2 70ps SE	Blue	6725	£7999
63	Corsa Energy Ac 1.4 5DR	Brown	20995	£8000
13	Astra 5Dr 1.4i VWT 100ps Energy	Silver	3601	£9000
63	Astra Energy 1.6 5DR	Blue	23302	£9291
63	Astra Energy 1.6 5dr	Silver	21450	£9495
13	Zafira Design Nav 1.8	Black	7817	£9710
15	Corsa 1.2 Excite A/C 5dr	Royal Blue	12000	£9999
62	Insignia Sri Nav Cdti 5drprk	Silver	28111	£10000
64	Corsa Limited Edition 3dr 1.2	Black	13327	£10000
14	Astra 5Dr 1.4i Energy	Silver	6925	£10295
15	Corsa Se 5dr 1.2	Green	9058	£11749
15	Corsa Se Ecoflex 1.4 5dr	Silver	16033	£11749
15	Astra Sri 5dr 1.4 (100ps)	Silver	16813	£11750
15	Corsa Sri Vx-Line S/S 3dr 1.4	Black	1077	£12332
14	Insignia Sri 5dr 1.8 5dr	Grey	37207	£12925
14	Mokka Tech Line Turbo S/S	Blue	29001	£12999
63	Mokka Se Turbo Auto	Silver	14400	£13700
14	Zafira Tourer Exclusiv Cd	Silver	36094	£14682
64	Mokka Exclusiv Turbo S/S (140	Blue	20985	£16450
15	Mokka Se S/S	Black	16395	£17032
15	Mokka Se S/S	White	16104	£17624

PLATE	MODEL	COLOUR	MILEAGE	PRICE
05	Suzuki Swift Vvts Glx Auto 5dr	Grey	38387	£3799
55	Suzuki Grand Vitara 16V Estate	Silver	45000	£5799
12	Suzuki Splash Sz2	Red	25514	£5995
13	Suzuki Swift Sz2	Red	10691	£7295
14	Suzuki Swift Sz3	Grey	8752	£7491
64	Suzuki Swift Sz2	White	4625	£7999
65	Suzuki Celerio Sz4 Auto	White	608	£7999
15	Suzuki Celerio 5Dr HAT 1.0 SZ3 Dualje	Ablaze Red	6382	£7999
13	Suzuki Swift Sport	Blue	2644	£9000
15	Suzuki Swift Sz4 Auto	Black	10516	£9700
63	Suzuki Grand Vitara Sz4	Black	28101	£11999
10	Chevrolet Spark Plus	Black	25596	£3495
11	Chevrolet Spark Ls	Blue	55000	£3795
61	Chevrolet Spark Ls	Black	30534	£3999
63	Chevrolet Spark 1.0 LS 5dr	Ice Silver	2823	£5495
13	Chevrolet Spark Ls	Black	35891	£5875
63	Chevrolet Trax Ls	Grey	24600	£9495
14	Trax 5Dr HAT 1.6 115ps LT St/s	Ice Silver	6982	£10999
62	Chevrolet Captiva Lt Vcdi Auto	White	24861	£14495
10	Mitsubishi Colt Cz2 3dr	Red	37000	£3999
07	Peugeot 207 Sport Cc	Silver	32000	£4295
64	Fiat Panda Pop 5DR	White	3600	£6000
62	Toyota Yaris Tr Vvt-l	Silver	23000	£6999
13	Fiat 500 Lounge Rhd 3DR	Yellow	14310	£7495
15	Renault Clio Expression Plus 1	Red	1400	£8000
14	Fiesta 3Dr ZETEC	Red	29700	£8295
12	Citroen Ds3 Dstyle + E-Hdi	White	40843	£8495
59	Nissan Qashqai N-Tec Dci	Silver	68704	£8495
14	Fiat Punto Jet Black 2	Black	9000	£8495
65	Ford Fiesta Zetec	Turbo Blue	6500	£9780
58	Ford Kuga Zetec Tdci Estate	Blue	47076	£9999
14	Ford Fiesta Zetec S 3DR	White	28528	£9999
14	Mitsubishi Asx 4 Di-D 4x4 1.8	White	13590	£16000

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Twins Charlotte, left, and Kathrine Whyte, from Fordhouses



Pathway manager Bob Askey



Coach Leigh Rees points the way to two young women players



Staffordshire women's batsman Alex Hale

Cricketing maidens look to stump the opposition

STAFFORDSHIRE women are padding up for a summer of high-class action alongside England's finest.

The county side had their first taste of top-flight cricket this month when they opened their ECB Women's County Championship Division One season.

Wolverhampton's Danescourt Road ground was the venue for the clash with Berkshire, who won by eight wickets.

But Staffordshire can look to build on last season's successful promotion-winning campaign as they host Yorkshire and Middlesex before the season's end in September, as well as travelling to face Kent, Warwickshire, Surrey and Sussex.

Under the watchful eye of performance and pathway manager Bob Askey and coach Leigh Rees, Staffs have made impressive progress on the field.

They set out with a five-year plan to reach the top division and achieved their aim with 12 months to spare.

Interest

And now Askey believes the chance to face the cream of English cricket will help to further lift the profile of the women's game across the county.

"Last season's promotion has helped to promote women's cricket around the county and I am sure playing at the top level will help generate more interest," he said.

"Women's cricket has always been strong in Staffordshire and we are looking to take the opportunity to grow the game further."

SPORTING FEATURE

By Nick Elwell

"Women's cricket has always been strong in Staffordshire and we are looking to take the opportunity to grow the game further."

"The key is to make the game accessible, whether it's games with a hard ball, soft ball or with an incredible ball."

Askey added: "It has been a busy winter. We have run various leagues throughout the winter and some women-only coaching sessions."

"We have also got a number of festivals planned throughout the summer and will have a girls only academy this year for the first time."

And while there have been positive steps taken during the winter months, Askey is well aware of the challenges facing his squad on the field this summer.

The top players in the English game are now supported full-time by the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Staffs girls, including Fordhouses twins Charlotte and Kathryn Whyte, Wolverhampton's Alex Hale and Bloxwich's Cheryl Alcock, will be lining up against members of the England Test and one-day outfits. The national side, captained by Char-

lotte Edwards, reached the semi-finals of the recent World T20 competition – won by the West Indies – and Askey is keen to see how his troops measure up as they try to emulate Danielle Wyatt and Georgia Elwiss, both of whom progressed through the Staffs ranks and have gone on to represent their country.

"They will be playing against England stars this summer and there is no doubt it is going to be tough for them," added Askey.

"But they are a pretty resilient and determined bunch and they are looking forward to the challenge."

"Danielle Wyatt and Georgia Elwiss have both gone on to play for England and it's a great incentive for them."

Strategies

"We will be facing some great opposition and some quality players and that is what you want to be doing."

"We have been running various sessions throughout the winter and we are now focusing on various strategies that we will need."

"The level of fitness in the top division will be better and there will be a greater intensity to the games."

"The players at this level will be a lot more consistent. We will need to be more patient in our approach."

Berkshire, Kent, Middlesex, Somerset, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire and Yorkshire will provide the championship opposition this summer while Staffs will lock horns with Durham, Essex, Hampshire, Somerset, Surrey, Wales and Worcestershire in the T20 competition.

The T20 format sees three teams playing on one day with one round of matches scheduled for Worcestershire's New Road base.



Bob Askey looks on as players are put through their paces during a nets session



Putting bat on ball during a practice session at Stafford Grammar School



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Heathens in crunch clash with rivals

CRADLEY face a crunch clash with rivals Coventry at Monmore on Monday – and boss Will Pottinger is telling his riders to stop throwing points away.

The Heathens were sent crashing to a 51-39 defeat when the sides met at Brandon earlier this month – but they could and should have claimed at least a point after crashing and suffering bike problems in winning positions.

Now Pottinger is urging his riders to go for revenge when the sides meet again at Wolverhampton with Heathens looking to make it five straight home wins.

He said: “We threw a large number of points away against Coventry and if we’d have held on to those then we would probably have come away with a narrow away win.

“It was a frustrating night but now it’s time to focus on getting the better of them at our own place. We want to continue where we left off against the Isle of Wight at home. We showed some good character to bounce back and get another home victory under our belts. We pulled together as a team once again and we came out on top in a tough battle.”

Pottinger says it will take another solid all-round effort to notch a fifth successive home win on Monday. “It’s going to take another whole team performance against Coventry and we’re especially looking for important contributions from the second string and reserve positions to support our powerful heat-leaders.

“We’re really pleased with how Ben Basford is progressing, even since moving into the main body of the team, he’s showing some encouraging signs and he’s progressing with every race he does.

“I was chuffed for James Purchase who got his highest score of the season against the Isle of Wight; his contribution from reserve was one of the key differences between us winning and losing.”

Halesowen golf trio take an inaugural club team trophy

A TRIO of Halesowen golfers collected the Dave McDermott Bowl in a county tournament at the Fulford Heath Golf Club.

Mike Willetts, Michael Howard and Lee Grice got 99 points between them to take the inaugural club team trophy, beating Little Lakes A into second place and Fulford Heath third.

The competition was held alongside the individual handicap tournament for the Brenda Smith Cup. The aim of this tournament, created by Worcestershire County Secretary Stuart Pritchard, was to provide a competition for higher handicap members, honouring the valued efforts of long-serving executive officers, Brenda Smith (Honorary Life Member) and David McDermott (County vice-president).

Some 147 members were selected to represent their clubs in the three-ball Stableford contest. Halesowen player Lee Grice picked up the individual trophy with 36 points, ahead of Cleobury Mortimer’s Ian Davies and Charles Grumbridge, of Little Lakes.

Karate kids prove fundraising belters



Young Gloves with Kemp for Kids representatives

KARATE kids proved little belters as they raised more than £3,500 for charity.

More than 200 members of Young Gloves Karate, which has a club in Stourbridge, took part in an annual children’s competition, fighting it out for 84 trophies. Money was also raised from a summer barbecue, as well as via sponsorships, raffles and stalls.

Cheques were presented to the Brain Tumour Charity for £767.14, to Kemp For Kids, part of Kemp Hospice for £976.59, to Little Hearts Matter for £868.08 and Mentor link for £976.59.

Sensei Justin Thomas and Gerard Thomas,

Karate

Sensei and events co-ordination marketing manager, presented the cheques.

Meanwhile, the club enjoyed success at the British Open championships. Golds were won by Kayleigh Avery in the 13-15 years kumite and silver by Lewis Meacher in the 16-18 years kumite.

Joel Rusello and Tom Ames both claimed bronze in the 16-18 years kumite and Lewis Meacher in the kata for the same age. Emily Day returned with bronzes, in the 13-15 and then the 16-18 years kumite along with Ashleigh Avery.

Gala swim victory for Hales Juniors

JUNIOR Swimmers travelled to Stafford for the second round of the Nuneaton Junior League on Saturday.

After coming second in the first round, Halesowen swimmers moved up a gear and performed strongly from the start to move into the lead and remained in front to finish the gala with a comfortable win.

Their 252 points put them ahead of Coalville on 216, Kingsbury Aquarius on 183, Fox Hollies on 133, Northampton B 129 and Walsall 113.

Star of the show was Jacob Bailey who won three individual races – the 50m backstroke in his own 11 years age group and the age group above, plus the 50m breaststroke.

Double event winner Naimh Larkin triumphed in the 50m breaststroke and 50m butterfly.

Individual winners were William Walker and Adam Ryan in the 50m freestyle, Sarah Elfrey in the 50m breaststroke and Jamie Worton in the 50m butterfly.

It was the first year for the 9-year-olds and they performed well. Double event winner Caleb Darby had success in the 25m butterfly and 25m freestyle. Individual winners were Ryan Worton and Jasmine Alderson in the 25m breaststroke and Beau Luscombe in the 25m backstroke.

The relay teams were successful with both the 11-year-old boys and girls’ teams winning both their medley and freestyle relay races. The girls were Libby Hickman, Sarah Elfrey, Tegan Turley and Gemma Vaughan-Hawkins. The boys included Jacob Bailey, Noah Taylor, Jamie Worton and Adam Ryan.

The 9-year-old boys and girls team also won both their medley and freestyle relays. The 12-year-old boys won their medley relay and mixed age boys 8x1 freestyle relay team were also winners.

Bronze return for triathlete Rogers

BLACK Country Triathlete Paul Rogers came back with a well-earned bronze for his age group, representing Great Britain in the European Long Distance Duathlon Championships in Copenhagen. The discipline comprised a 10k run, 60k bike ride and a further 10k run.

Club colleague Liz Hettle faced unseasonal conditions in Mallorca for the Ironman 70.3 middle distance triathlon, finishing in a good time of 07:44:55 after a 1.2 mile sea swim, 56-mile bike and a 13.1 mile run.

Jacob Anson also took first place in the Darwins Challenge Aquathlon in Shrewsbury.

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OVERSEAS BID IS STEPPED UP

HALESOWEN are stepping up their bid to sign an overseas player – and chairman Richard Evans has dropped a big hint towards a seam bowler.

Will Barrett is still on the treatment table after suffering a slight stress fracture of the lower back and his absence has left a hole in the attack.

The Big Pet Store sponsored side have taken their time looking for the right man and with three games completed they are now ready to make their move.

They were linked with a swoop for an experienced spinner but with the emergence of Mashraf Shazad and Jack Myers, who have both been impressive in recent weeks, it has forced the club into a rethink.

Skipper Richard Brooker is currently the leader of the three-pronged spin attack which will no doubt be even more potent in the second half of the season when the wickets dry out.

Coach

Chairman Evans said: “We have been mulling our options over for some time and had been in contact with an experienced spinner in India to come to us but that hasn’t worked.

“It may be a blessing in disguise now that we have had chance to assess where we are in terms of the balance of the squads.

“This week myself, Richard Brooker and Richard Cox, who has recently appointed as Head Coach to take over from David Banks, will now be re-assessing the situation with a preference towards someone who can support our seam bowling attack which is shorn of Will Barrett for a few more weeks.

“We hope to make an announcement on this in the coming days, after we have done the due diligence regarding administration and the various background checks.”

Meanwhile, Halesowen are joint third in the Birmingham League with Shifnal after a comfortable win over neighbours Stourbridge at the weekend. Stourbridge were skittled out for 151. Skipper Richard Brooker said: “That’s more like us, our spinners got the ball in decent areas and applied the pressure at a key stage of the game.”

Jess: I still want to go to Rio



Cyclist Jess Varnish still has hopes for the Rio Olympics

HALESOWEN cyclist Jess Varnish has insisted she retains the desire to ride for Team GB at the Rio Olympics and has questioned the objectiveness of the decision to drop her from the squad in April.

British Cycling decided to not extend her contract a month after she and Katy Marchant narrowly failed to qualify for the team sprint event in Rio at the World Championships in London. Technical director Shane Sutton said that 25-year-old Varnish was ‘too old’ and there was ‘no point wasting’ any more government funding on her.

Varnish, however, hit back in an explosive interview in which she set out a chain of events that led to Sutton’s resignation and an investigation to begin into an alleged culture of bullying within the British squad, amid claims he had told her to ‘go and have a baby’.

Since then, Varnish has been training at her own expense in Australia, but she will return to the UK this week for a meeting with the team’s new performance director Andy Harrison.

“My immediate priority is to win back my place on the British Cycling team, ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games, and to prove that I was, and still am, good enough to win medals for Great Britain,” she said.

Varnish, who has won seven medals for Great Britain since 2010, also revealed that she has spoken to British Cycling and UK Sport, the government agency that funds British elite sport, about the allegations of bullying that she made last month, and she has stood by them.

She added: “It is been a dream for me ever since London 2012 to compete and be successful in Rio.”

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